



Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa

Regional Country Profiles

The Study Team are responsible for the choice and presentation of the data and facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein, these are not necessarily those of SARUA nor the AAU and do not make any commitment for either association.

The country study presented here was prepared as a part of the study “Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa” (SARUA, 2009). It forms the background data to that study and is published here as an appendix to that report. The Country Studies data has not been subjected to the same level of editorial scrutiny as the Report itself. However, we publish these country studies as supplemental information to that presented in the Report, and hope that they will be of value to other researchers in the region.

MALAWI

6.1 Country Context

TABLE: 1. World Development Indicators

World Development Indicators	Yr 2006
Population, total (millions)	13.6
Population growth (annual %)	2.6
Surface area (sq km) (thousands)	118.5
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	47.6
Mortality rate, infant (per 1 000 live births)	76.1
GNI (current US\$) (billions)	3.1
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	230
Prevalence of HIV, total (% of population ages 15-49)	14.1

Source: *World Bank Malawi: Quick Facts*¹

Out of a population of 10 million Malawians, 50 percent are chronically malnourished (Development Research Group 2004). The majority of Malawians (84 percent) are subsistence farmers, but their contribution to GDP comprises only 40 percent. The remaining 60 percent of the GDP emanates mainly from services and industry but this sector benefits only 16 percent of the population.

The Malawi government's commitment to basic education is evidenced by the declaration of Free Primary Education in 1994 (Ed Policy and Investment Framework).

6.2 Planning Context

¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MADAGASCAREXTN/0,,menuPK:356378~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:356352,00.html> accessed 19 August 2008
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/MALAWIEXTN/0,,menuPK:355898~pagePK:141132~piPK:141109~theSitePK:355870,00.html>

Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS): the government is striving to develop human capital to reduce poverty, and enable full participation in the socioeconomic and political development of the country. At a tertiary level this calls for a focused effort on producing high quality professionals with relevant knowledge and skills in relevant fields.²

Millennium Development Goals: Malawi seeks to achieve and sustain MDGs which are also long-term targets and aspirations for the people of the country. As such, building a healthy, educated and gender-sensitive population is a priority for Malawi. The MGDs emphasise building a healthy and educated human resource base and protecting and empowering the most vulnerable.

Education is a sub-theme (no.2) of Theme 3 – Social Development in the MGDs. In the education sector, the emphasis will be on equipping students, especially at primary school level with basic knowledge and skills to enable them to function as competent and productive citizens; to provide an academic basis for gainful employment in the informal, private and public sectors; and to produce high quality professionals with relevant knowledge. Key strategies include the provision of teaching and learning materials, training of teachers, and construction of appropriate classrooms.

The MGDs represent a policy shift from social consumption to sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development. Education is not explicitly represented in the six key priority areas of agriculture and food security; irrigation and water development; transport infrastructure development; energy generation and supply; integrated rural development; and prevention and management of nutrition disorders and HIV/AIDS. These six key priority areas are also expected to accelerate the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the areas of health, education, gender, environment, and governance. In this regard, the MGDs maintain a balance between the economic and social sectors of the economy.

Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) for the education sector. (2000 – 2012)

The PIF spells out government policy on education. It defines the country's educational policies and outlines the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture's (MoES&Cs) priority programmes during the 12 years from 2000 – 2012.

Objectives of PIF

- Securing equality of education

² Government of Malawi, *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy: From Poverty to Prosperity 2006 – 2011*, p.xxii and 51

- Increasing enrolment per age cohort and maintaining and improving the quality and relevance of education
- Developing an institutional and financial framework that will sustain Malawian schools and students into the future. The PIF advocates the strengthening of the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture and relevant institutions to plan and manage educational resources more cost-effectively

The PIF recognises that the proposed changes are unlikely to be achieved with the current level of funding from Government while appreciating that the Government is unlikely to spend more than the current 27 percent of the national budget on education. The main thrust of the policy is that those in society who can afford it will be asked to share in the cost of education provision while ensuring that the poorer sections of society are not forced to drop out of school because of an inability to pay. (Ed Policy and Investment Framework)

Specific PIF Targets

- Attain 50:50 male/ female enrolment ratio at primary education institutions
- Attain 60:40 male/ female enrolment ratio in secondary ratio
- Attain 75:25 male/ female enrolment ratio in higher education
- TVET: Integrate vocational training and entrepreneurship into the formal education system

6.3 Education Context

The Ministry of Education's structure contains a headquarters, six education divisions, each responsible for six districts, within these there are nine zones. Does this however mean that the zones are within the districts of the divisions? A Primary Education Advisor (PEA) is attached to each zone and is accountable for approximately 14 primary schools. At the secondary level, schools are now organised into clusters of ten.

Primary school dropout rates are between 10 percent and 11 percent and the repetition rate between 15 percent and 26 percent, statistics vary according to source data (DRG 2004). Studies show that micro-nutrient deficiencies have a significant impact on child development and education (DRG 2004).

Teacher training is inadequate. Due to the rapid expansion of primary enrolments around half the current teaching force is not fully trained (many have received in-service training). Malawi's six teacher training colleges are not producing enough teachers. Teacher attrition is around ten percent and a significant share is due to Aids-related illness and death. This prompted the introduction of the *Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme* (MIITEP). This two-

year training course combines formal training and field-based experience (three cohorts per year of approximately 500 are in college facilities, while another three cohorts are field-based).

The total capacity of primary teacher-training colleges was 3 500 in 1999. Secondary teachers are also trained at the education faculty of the University of Malawi, the University of Mzuzu, the Polytechnic and Bunda College of Agriculture and the African Bible College (the only private provider).

6.3.1 Focus on Higher Education

6.3.1.1 Policy environment

Vision 2020: This is to 'Improve Tertiary Education' and to 'raise the relevant GER from 0,3 percent to 1 percent.'

PRSP/Malawi growth and development strategy 2006 – 2011

As mentioned above, education is not one of the top six priority areas of the MGDs. However, the MGDs confirm Malawi's commitment to the MDGs and in terms of tertiary education state:-

- Increase undergraduate enrolment by 40 percent
- Increase postgraduate enrolment by 10 percent of undergraduate enrolment
- Increase level of female enrolment to 35 percent by 2010
- Improve the higher education curriculum

The goal to increase enrolment by 40% in five years needs to be contextualised in that during the four years from 1995 to 1999, the increase in enrolment was 6,2%. In addition, the following section details large scale problems with regard to the financing and provision of higher education, with the conclusion that it is unlikely Malawi will be able to achieve the goal of a 40 percent increase in enrolment.

The strategic plans of Malawi do not have a major focus on higher education. This is understandable since, in 2004, the country was in a negative growth cycle and on the verge of economic collapse. Although the economy has improved since 2005, Malawi remains plagued by high levels of poverty. The focus of the MGDs is on issues of food security, access to drinking water and reducing the mortality rate of 100 per 100 000 in under-five year olds. Economic indicators in this report do not include the effect of the 2008 hike in food and oil prices, the shrinkage of South Africa's economy and the full impact of Zimbabwe's economic

collapse, which in all likelihood will slow down the growth economy of Malawi. In this light, the lack of a comprehensive plan for higher education will lead Malawi to a spiralling level of dependence on the import of skilled labour to deal with 50 percent of the population living below the poverty line; 35 percent of the population not having access to potable waters and 40 percent of all under-five deaths being caused by malaria (World Bank 2008).

National Education Sector Plan 2008-2013 (NESP)

The NESP aims to prepare graduates for the social and economic development effort and for employment in the world labour markets. There are nine areas which the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture identifies as needing attention at universities:

1. A weakness in management
2. A lack of productivity monitoring
3. Poorly defined governance structures
4. High unit cost per student
5. Monitoring of throughputs and outputs
6. High graduate unemployment
7. Dysfunctional external moderation system
8. The junior level of faculty
9. Inadequate facilities (lecture rooms; libraries; laboratories and computer access)

The issue of the high student unit cost will be unpacked below in the section on 'Further Comments', as it is central to understanding the provision of higher education in Malawi. The NESP recognises that current academic levels are low, with 20 percent of the University of Malawi faculty and 1 percent of the Mzuzu faculty in possession of PhDs.

All of the nine areas that the NESP highlights for attention are institutional issues with the exception of the low graduate employment rate. With a low (less than 4 percent) GDP growth, an increase in graduate employment is unlikely in the short term. As part of the NESP, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture set specific targets to:

- Increase the enrolment rate from 3 500 to 12 000 by 2012
- Have 15 percent of the student population accessing higher education through distance learning
- Have private institutions absorbing 15 percent of university enrolment by 2012
- increase female enrolment from 28 percent to 50 percent
- Have 15 percent of enrolment earmarked for disadvantaged groups
- In addition a number of specific cost saving measures are planned:
- students covering their full board costs by 2012

- 20 percent of student enrolment paying full university fees
- 50 percent of students paying 50 percent of their university fees
- 30 percent on a full scholarship
- Increase the lecturer/ student ratio from the current 1: 10 to 1: 25

In terms of attracting fee paying students, the university will accept any fee paying students as long as they have the minimum university entrance requirement. In other words, fee paying students will be given priority over students requiring state funding, regardless of their academic ability. (Zambia has adopted the same strategy.) The Ministry also intends to privatise student welfare services and replace staff housing on campus with a housing subsidy scheme.

The increase of students to 12 000, amounts to a 243 percent growth in enrolment, which is almost double the objective set in the MGDs. As the NESP was developed after the MGDs, it appears that the Government of Malawi has increased its commitment to raising the country's higher education enrolment.

6.3.1.2 Profile of Higher Education

- 1 public university – University of Malawi – offering agricultural sciences; liberal arts; natural sciences; and medicine
- 1 university-level teacher training institute – Mzuzu
- 1 polytechnic – offering business; engineering; construction; telecommunications; welding; and architecture
- The University of Malawi was established in 1965.

The number of students enrolled in tertiary education increased from 3 200 in 1999 to 5 000 in 2004. Over the same period the GER increased from 0,3 percent to 0,4 percent.

6.3.1.3 Governance

Legislation: To be developed

Structure: Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture

6.4 Financing Context

At the time of writing, the consultants were not able to source detailed budget statements for the Government of Malawi. The budget information in this section was obtained from the Annual Economic Report 2008 produced by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. It is thus based on the functional classification of government and not according to Ministries as with other countries. Therefore, the Education Sector will be broader than just the Ministry of Education.

TABLE: 2. National Budget Allocations

Kwacha Million	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	119,085	132,153	179,378	229,242
Education Affairs & Services	13,014	14,108	18,901	25,746
% of budget	10.93%	10.68%	10.54%	11.23%
% of GDP	3.39%	3.06%	3.59%	4.37%
Health Affairs & Services	14,240	10,306	13,686	18,824
% of budget	11.96%	7.80%	7.63%	8.21%
% of GDP	3.71%	2.23%	2.60%	3.20%
Social Security & Welfare Affairs and Services	3,162	8,110	10,354.5	14,866.5
% of budget	2.66%	6.14%	5.77%	6.49%
% of GDP	0.82%	1.76%	1.97%	2.53%
Defence Affairs	5,116	3,933	4,959	7,218
% of budget	4.30%	2.98%	2.76%	3.15%
% of GDP	1.33%	0.85%	0.94%	1.23%
GDP	384,200	461,700	526,250	588,700

Source: Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Annual Economic Report 2008

Over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09, spending on Education Affairs increases from K13,014 million to K25,746 million, growing at an average annual rate of 25.5 percent. At the same time, Education

Affairs spending as a percentage of the budget grew marginally from 10,9 percent to 11,2 percent and as a percentage of GDP grew from 3,4 percent to 4,4percent. Over the same period the proportion of the budget allocated to Health Affairs declined from 12 percent in 2005/06 to 8,2 percent in 2008/09. Allocations to Social Security and Welfare Affairs increased at a rapid rate growing from 2,66 percent of the budget in 2005/06 to 6,49 percent of the budget in 2008/09. Over the same period, allocations to Defence Affairs decreased from 4,3 percent of the budget to 3.2 percent. Allocations to Health Affairs grew at an average annual rate of 9,7 percent between 2005/06 and 2008/09; allocations to Social Security and Welfare grew at an average annual rate of 67,5 percent and allocations to Defence grew at an average annual rate of 12,2 percent.

TABLE: 3. Education Budget Allocations

Kwacha	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Allocation	Actual	Actual	Estimate	Estimate
Total Expenditure	11,988,881,000	15,780,242,000	17,574,130,952	19,321,533,840
Recurrent Expenditure	9,361,047,000	11,151,242,000	12,549,683,952	15,741,267,480
% total	78.08%	70.67%	71.41%	81.47%
Administration and Support Services	457,907,000	416,388,000	510,120,889	470,527,315
% of recurrent	4.89%	3.73%	4.06%	2.99%
Research Technology Generation & Development	-	-	61,200,000	53,674,510
% of recurrent			0.49%	0.34%
Primary Education	557,734,000	582,854,000	680,817,906	1,144,499,630
% of recurrent	5.96%	5.23%	5.42%	7.27%
Secondary Education	697,551,000	893,811,000	1,074,184,365	1,170,116,331
% of recurrent	7.45%	8.02%	8.56%	7.43%
Tertiary Education	347,020,000	445,530,000	577,848,000	1,122,682,214
% of recurrent	3.71%	4.00%	4.60%	7.13%
Personal Emoluments	7,300,835,000	8,812,659,000	9,645,512,792	11,779,767,480
% of recurrent	77.99%	79.03%	76.86%	74.83%

Capital Expenditure	2,627,834,000	4,629,000,000	5,024,447,000	3,580,266,360
% total	21.92%	29.33%	28.59%	18.53%
Capital Part I (Foreign resources through MoF account)	2,387,834,000	4,424,000,000	4,678,085,000	2,699,276,160
% capital	90.87%	95.57%	93.11%	75.39%
Capital Part II (Locally funded)	240,000,000	205,000,000	346,362,000	880,990,200
% capital	9.13%	4.43%	6.89%	24.61%

Source: Spreadsheet from the Ministry of Education

On average, over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09, 75,4 percent of the Education budget is recurrent expenditure while 24,6 percent was allocated to the capital budget. Within the recurrent budget personnel emoluments took the highest share, on average, 77,2 percent of the recurrent budget. Over the period, personnel expenditure grew at an average annual rate of 17,3 percent while spending on primary grew at an average annual rate of 27,1 percent, secondary at 18,8 percent and tertiary at 47,9 percent. Of the capital budget, on average, 88,7 percent is financed through external sources. This external funding, however, decreased as a percentage of the total capital budget from 90,9 percent in 2005/06 to 75,4 percent in 2008/09. Over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09 the recurrent budget grew at an average annual rate of 18,9 percent while the capital budget grew at an average annual rate of 10,9 percent.

TABLE : 4. Transfers to Subvented Organisations

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total for Subvented Organisations (Educational)	3,588,128,382	5,624,486,580	6,705,681,000
- University of Malawi	2,451,221,046	4,288,786,580	4,996,481,000
- Malawi Institute of Education	90,000,000	125,000,000	150,000,000
- National Library Services	50,000,000	61,000,000	73,200,000
- National UNESCO Commission	20,237,082	30,000,000	36,000,000
- Malawi National Examinations Board	430,000,000	478,200,000	600,000,000
- Mzuzu University	546,670,254	641,500,000	850,000,000

Of the total amount transferred to subvented organisations for Tertiary Education the majority goes to the University of Malawi, followed by Mzuzu University. Transfers to the University of Malawi

grew at an average annual rate of 42,8 percent between 2005/06 and 2007/08 while over the same period transfers to Mzuzu University grew at an average annual rate of 24,7 percent.

According to the Budget Speech 2008, the total allocation to the two universities in 2008/09 is K6,4-billion which is more than six times the expenditure on these institutions in the 2003/04 budget. Within this figure, K360-million has been allocated to the University of Malawi to continue with the programme of the rehabilitation of buildings in its constituent colleges and a further K150 million has been allocated to Mzuzu University for its development activities.

6.5 Donor Context

The education sector has a significant proportion of projects that are *off budget* although this proportion is gradually declining. The five main bilateral donors, whose expenditure are not recorded in the development budget, provided the equivalent of about 60 percent of the public development budget in 1999-00 and 54 percent in 2000-01. Bilateral donor funds are focused on primary and teacher education, so that despite the new emphasis on secondary education in the development budget, the primary programme still receives the bulk of sector development expenditure

6.6 Issues and Observations

The targets set by the Government of Malawi focus on increasing enrolment and decreasing the per student unit costs. Enrolment is at 0,05 percent of the population (55/100 000) and for any sustainable growth, this needs to be addressed. However the path the Government of Malawi is following is making university admission less accessible. Malawi needs to address its high per student unit cost. In 1998 the amount spent on university students was 167 times greater than primary learners. This is almost three times the level of Zambia, which spent 64 times more on university students than primary school learners. The per-student unit cost was showing a marginal decrease, when in 2004/05 the trend was reversed with the government allocation to universities doubling and enrolment increasing only marginally. This appears to be caused by the Government of Malawi's decision to increasing tuition fees six-fold, at a time when they were almost entirely responsible for covering tuition fees for all students.

The high per student unit cost (32 times greater than per capita GDP) is caused by a few factors:

- The average lecturer/student ratio is 1:10, and in the medical college drops as low as 1: 2
- The ratio of support, administrative and maintenance staff is high
- The bulk of the government grant to UNIMA goes to administration; boarding; maintenance and non-academic staff

In addition, there is a low student survival rate (with less than 10 percent of first years graduating) and, similar to Lesotho, Malawi has poor management of its student loan recovery process. (World Bank. PER. 2008)

Already the middle and upper class are advantaged by their easy access to free higher education as they can study and do not need to be overly concerned about paying back their government loan. The plan of the NESP may enforce payment from those who can afford it, by limiting access to the poor to only 30% of university intake. Although fee recovery is a strategy being explored by most countries in this study as a mechanism for increasing enrolment, under current conditions in Malawi it will not only lead to higher levels of inequity, but could lead to a decline in the already small enrolment for higher education. Skilled personnel leave Malawi for much better paid employment overseas, the majority being nurses who migrate to Europe, Australia and other countries. Over the period 2000/05 an estimated total of approximately 400 health personnel migrated to other countries with approximately 300 leaving for the UK. It is estimated that 95 percent of these migrants are nurses (NIP and country strategy)