The Third Approach to Enhancing Teacher Supply in Malawi:

Volume 1

The UNICEF ESARO Study on Recruitment, Utilization, and Retention of Teachers

UNICEF ESARO & UNICEF MALAWI, MARCH 22, 2011

Authors:
Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Columbia University, New York
Demis Kunje, Chancellors College, University of Malawi, Zomba
# Table of Contents

1. The UNICEF ESARO Study on Teachers  
   1.1. The Third Approach  
   1.2. Degradation of Teacher Quality in Malawi: A Historical Sketch  
   1.3. Focus on Teacher Quality  
   1.4. Organization of the ESARO Study on Teachers  

2. Background and Contextual Information  
   2.1. Structure of the Educational System  
      2.1.1. General Education  
      2.1.2. Teacher Education for Primary Schools  
   2.2. Schools by Type and Location  
   2.3. Access and Completion by Gender and Socio-Economic Status  
   2.4. Health and Education  
   2.5. Key Challenges for Primary Education  
      2.5.1. Increasing the amount of public resources  
      2.5.2. Reducing the high dropout rates  
      2.5.3. Raising the level of student achievement  
      2.5.4. Reducing the repetition rate  
      2.5.5. Reducing the teacher-learner ratio  

3. Characteristics of the Primary Teaching Force  
   3.1. Gender and Age  
   3.2. Qualification  
   3.3. Status  
   3.4. Salary  
   3.5. Attrition  

4. The Third Approach: Reducing Inefficiencies  
   4.1. Assessment of Recruitment into Teaching  
   4.2. Underutilization of Teacher Education Lecturers  
      4.2.1. Low Intake of Teacher Education Students  
      4.2.2. Low Teaching Load of TTC Lecturers  
      4.2.3. Low Acceptance for the Non-Residential Program  
   4.3. Underutilization of Teachers  
      4.3.1. Low Contact Hours in Early Primary Cycle  
      4.3.2. Low Acceptance of Double-Shift  
      4.3.3. Multi-Grade Teaching  
   4.4. Retention of Teachers  

5. Summary of Recommendations
List of Tables, Figures, Boxes, Appendices

Table 1: Number of Primary Schools by Location
Table 2: Examination Pass Rates by Type of School
Table 3: Age Distribution in Secondary School by Gender
Table 4: Teacher-Student Ratios in Public Schools
Table 5: Number of Primary Teachers by Gender and Divisions/Districts
Table 6: Teachers by Grade and Divisions in Public Schools
Table 7: Salaries of Primary Teachers by Grade and Notch
Table 8: Contact Hours in Primary School
Table 9: Trained Teachers by Shift
Table 10: Vacancy Analysis for Basic Education

Figure 1: Three Strategic Approaches to Improving Teacher Supply: An Overview
Figure 2: Teacher Training in Malawi
Figure 3: Three Strategic Approaches to Improving Teacher Supply
Figure 4: Standardized Exit Examinations in General Education
Figure 5: The Two Currently Offered Teacher Training Programs
Figure 6: Access and Completion of the Different Levels by Gender
Figure 7: Access and Completion of the Different Levels by Wealth Quintile
Figure 8: Educational Pyramids for Malawi and Sub-Saharan Africa
Figure 9: Primary School Teachers by Academic Qualifications
Figure 10: Primary Teachers by Training
Figure 11: Recruitment into Teaching in Singapore
Figure 12: Attrition Rate in the IPTE Cohorts 1-4
## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDSS</td>
<td>Community Day Secondary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Conventional Secondary Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE/CIS</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTED</td>
<td>Department of Teacher Education and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management and Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESARO</td>
<td>Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPTE</td>
<td>Initial Primary Teacher Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCE</td>
<td>Junior Certificate Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASTEP</td>
<td>Malawi Special Teacher Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSTER</td>
<td>Multi-Site Teacher Education Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSTED</td>
<td>National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIITEP</td>
<td>Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE</td>
<td>Malawi School Certificate Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODL</td>
<td>Open and Distance Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLCE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Teacher Training College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

We have organized the executive summary by sections of the report. This way, the reader may follow up with the details presented in each section.

Introduction

This ESARO UNICEF Study on Teachers deals with three areas that are closely related to the supply and quality of teachers: recruitment into teaching, utilization of teachers, and retention of qualified and motivated teachers. The focus of analysis is on efficiency in these three areas. Such an emphasis on efficiency supplements the two other approaches that have been in existence for the past 10-15 years: (1) enrolling under qualified teachers in open and distance learning training programs, and (2) increasing the intake in conventional pre-service teacher education. Even though the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology treats, in its Education Sector Implementation Plan 2009-2013, the shortage of qualified teachers as a top strategic priority, most projects and reform initiatives tend to focus on the first two approaches. Figure 1 illustrates the three approaches.

Figure 1: The Three Strategic Approaches to Improving Teacher Supply: An Overview

This report constitutes volume 1 of the ESARO UNICEF Study on Teachers. It draws on a desk review as well as interviews with a few key individuals from the education sectors. Volume 2 will present the findings from an empirical study that will be carried out in two educational divisions. The co-authors of the two reports are Gita Steiner-Khamsi (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York) and Demis Kunje (Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Zomba).
Background

There seems to be agreement on what the key challenges are in primary education. The following five challenges, listed in the Country Status Report (World Bank 2010), are also found in other analytical reports and official documents: (1) increasing the amount of public resources for primary education, (2) reducing the high dropout rates, (3) raising the level of student achievement, (4) reducing the repetition rate, and last but not least (5) reducing the teacher-learner ratio. The teacher-learner ratio is 1:80 for primary, 1:20 for secondary, and 1:11 for tertiary education. The ratio for primary is almost the double of the SADC region (1:41) and considerably higher that the average in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. There is a great variation among the divisions and districts in Malawi. In Lilongwe City the teacher-learner ratio is only 62 students as opposed to 273 students in the Mchinji district.

Characteristics of the Primary Teaching Force

Gender and Age: Sixty percent of primary teachers are men. It is only in Lilongwe City and Blantyre City that female teachers outnumber male teachers by a ratio of 3:1. It is striking that EMIS does not record the exact age of teachers.

Qualification: According to EMIS, 65 percent of primary school teachers completed secondary school and passed the Malawi School Certificate of Education prior to enrolling in a pre-service teacher education program. There also is information available on the qualification of teachers. 45 percent of the current teaching force complete the MII/TEP teacher education program (offered 1997-2003), 21 percent a 2-year training program (was in effect until 1993), and 11 percent the IPTE program (in existence since 2005). The remaining teachers either completed only a 1-year teacher training program (10 percent), are in training (4 percent), are untrained (3 percent), or their qualification is unknown (2 percent). In other words, only 3 percent of the teaching force is considered “untrained.” The authors suggest to move beyond the trained/untrained dichotomy and instead identify teacher training qualifications that, compared with the region, are considered sub-standards or unsatisfactory. Compared with other countries in the region, only teachers with the 2-year teacher training certificate, the IPTE certificate and MASTEP, amounting in total to 36 percent of the teaching force, should be regarded as having had an adequate teacher training. This means that two-third of the teaching force would need additional training to become effective teachers.

Status and Salary: A breakdown by grade (salary category) reveals a large ratio of teachers in the lowest grade PT4: 71.2 percent of current teachers have never or not yet been promoted. The reasons for not being promoted from PT4 to PT3, or for any other grade to a higher grade, respectively, range from lack of teaching experience (too junior), insufficient qualification (no MSCE Certificate), or limited posts in the higher grades and therefore highly selective promotion criteria. In contrast to the sizeable increase in salary from one grade to the next, the salaries within each grade are relatively compressed. This means,
there are few material incentives for qualified teachers to remain in the teaching profession longer than five years, let alone build a life career as a teacher.

**Attrition:** The only data made available is the attrition statistics from EMIS. The officially reported attrition rate is very low: 3.2 percent and the main reason (over one-third) is death.

**Reducing Inefficiencies**

**Recruitment into Teaching:** From the five indicators typically used to assess the efficiency of recruitment into teaching, only three measures are available in Malawi: admission rate, enrollment rate, and completion rate in teacher training. There exists currently no reliable statistical information on the last two indicators: college/university to work transition rate and retention rate of newly qualified teachers. Acceptance into teacher education is very selective. The admission rate is 15-20 percent, depending on the cohort in IPTE and ODL. For example, 27,000 applied for the IPTE 2 program. Of those 16,000 were deemed eligible based on their academic credentials but only 2,500 could be offered a seat. The average completion rate for the IPTE cohort 1-4 is 85 percent. This means that 15 percent of those that enrolled in one of the IPTE cohorts did not pass the teaching practice in year 2. The attrition rate for teacher education students in IPTE has slightly increased over the past two years.

**Underutilization of Teacher Education Lecturers:** The student-lecturer ratio at university level is with 11 : 1 very low. There are three factors that account for the underutilization of lecturers in Teacher Training Colleges: low enrollment of students, low teaching load of lecturers, and low social acceptance of the non-residential program. These three factors are explained in more detail in the report.

**Underutilization of Teachers:** Others before us have noticed the striking feature of teacher employment in Malawi: a gross underutilization of qualified teachers in a context where there is rampant teacher shortage (Göttelmann-Duret and Hogan 1998; Ndalama and Chidalengwa 2010). There are three areas, in particular, where the underutilization of teachers is clearly manifested: low contact hours in the early primary cycle, low social acceptance of double-shift, and hesitation to implement multi-grade teaching more systematically. The authors believe that double-shift in Malawi provokes wrong associations and is possibly mistaken with overlapping shifts. There is a need to develop a policy that lays out in detail the organizational details and the conditions for double-shifting including not compromising on the duration of instructional hours and on paying teachers extra for the second shift. At the same time, qualified teachers should be discouraged to “team-teach.” There is no sufficient ground to permit classes of 150 learners or more only because teachers like to cover each others’ hours. Unless there are teaching assistants or teacher trainees (IPTE, ODL teachers) involved, there is no reason to approve team-teaching. Team-teaching should be considered as a last resort for schools with a shortage of classrooms that despite having introduced double and overlapping shifts still lack classrooms.
**Retention of Teachers:** There are conflicting figures on the attrition of qualified teachers but in general it seems to be low (less than 5 percent). It is important to keep in mind that attrition is only one of several indicators of teacher dissatisfaction. Another indicator with large pedagogical repercussions is low motivation or low teacher morale. There are several factors that diminish teacher morale; one of them is the perception of a career ceiling. The current salary structure in Malawi is attractive for newly qualified teachers as well as for junior teachers; the salary of regular primary teachers (PT4) is 5.5 times the average GDP per capita. But the teacher salary is not attractive for qualified teachers with substantial teaching experience. In fact, it encourages experienced teachers to quit the teaching profession already after five years of experience. Those that remain for fifteen years or more, until they fulfill the retirement requirement, are likely to be unmotivated and low on morale as expressed in teacher absenteeism, little time on task, and other related problems.

**Recommendations**

The recommendations are summarized on one page in this report and are therefore not reiterated here. The recommendations cover five areas of reforms that would help improve the efficiency for enhancing the supply and quality of teachers:

- Need for expanding educational statistics/indicators
- Improve quality of pre-service teacher education
- Expand the non-residential programs at Teacher Training Colleges
- Revise the status and salary structure of teachers

**Pay much greater attention to the utilization of teachers**
1. The UNICEF ESARO Study on Teachers

The Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) of UNICEF identified teacher related reforms as an emergent priority. It is a reform area where UNICEF is expected to play a key role to play in the future. UNICEF ESARO therefore commissioned several studies on teachers in the region that could serve as a foundation to develop a systematic teacher attraction, development, and retention strategy.¹

1.1. The Third Approach

The current strategic priorities for boosting teacher supply are output oriented, that is, producing more qualified teachers by means of (1) enrolling under qualified teachers in open and distance learning training programs and (2) increasing the intake in conventional pre-service teacher education. These two approaches are made explicit in the Sector Implementation Plan 2009-2013 (MoEST 2009: 27; italics inserted by the author):

*Teacher Professional Development:* This initiative focuses on addressing the critical concern of getting more and better qualified teachers into the education system to reduce pupil-teacher ratios and promote quality teaching and learning. This will be achieved by an intensive drive to train and upgrade the qualifications of more teachers. The Ministry will *increase the number of qualified teachers in the education system by constructing and expanding teacher training colleges and implementing a distance learning programme for teacher trainees.* Recruitment of assistant teachers is also a new initiative designed as a short-term measure to fill gaps.

The third approach to enhancing the supply of qualified teachers—increasing the internal efficiency—is also mentioned as one of the strategic priorities. However, compared to the first two approaches, its implementation is not laid out in further detail (MoEST 2009: 27; italics inserted by the authors):

*The Ministry, however, recognizes that the mere production of teachers is not sufficient to redress the problem of shortages owing to high rates of absenteeism and attrition. Therefore, the Ministry will simultaneously *introduce a package of teacher incentives to motivate and retain the majority of teachers* trained at Government’s expense in our school as well as measures to enhance attendance, retention and promote quality of learning in the classroom.*

The UNICEF ESARO Study on Teachers summarizes efforts that were undertaken to increase teacher supply over the past twenty years. Those efforts represent the first two

¹ UNICEF ESARO (Eastern and Southern Africa Region) has commissioned similar case studies on teachers in Lesotho and Swaziland. UNICEF CEE/CIS Region (Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States Region) completed studies on teacher attraction, professional development, and retention in six countries of the CEE/CIS region.
approaches to increasing teacher supply. In addition, this study proposes additional avenues that could be further explored. Those avenues are situated at a crossroad of the third approach and include reform measures that would improve recruitment into teaching, utilization, and retention of teachers. It is a terrain that is not sufficiently explored. The third approach would, if thoroughly understood and systematically implemented, remedy teacher shortage in a much more sustainable and teacher-friendly manner than the current two approaches.

1.2. Degradation of Teacher Quality in Malawi: A Historical Sketch

Teacher education was for a long period, from 1964 to 1994, a two-year program. It was exclusively offered as a residential program. The TTCs provided two types of primary teacher training, depending on the cycle in which the teachers were teaching: For T3 teachers the academic admission prerequisite was a JCE (lower secondary certificate), and for T2 teachers a MSCE (upper secondary certificate).

In an endeavor to respond to the teacher shortage crisis, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) embarked on two emergency initiatives in the 1990s that, with a few modifications, persist to this day:

1) Introduction of an alternative program of teacher training: open and distance learning (ODL)

2) Increase of the intake in the residential program of pre-service teacher training

The two different teacher training modalities—residential and distance learning format—are depicted in figure 2. The also illustrates how teacher training has been shortened in duration over the course of the past twenty years.

Figure 2: Teacher Training in Malawi
The first approach—introduction of ODL—enabled MoEST to narrow the gap in teacher supply in the short run by hiring unqualified teachers who periodically attend training sessions. Admission to an ODL teacher training program requires lower academic scores than for the residential program. The previous ODL program MIITEP (Malawi Integrated In-Service Teacher Education Programme), in fact, was criticized for indiscriminately enrolling secondary school graduates even those without proper exit examination documentation. It also faced challenges that are inherent to distance learning programs: the problem of enforcing attendance in the periodic training sessions and the lack of supervision during the school-based mode. The MIITEP program was dismantled in 2003 due to quality concerns.

The second approach—increased intake in the residential pre-service teacher training program—was made possible by continuously shortening, over the past two decades, the duration of the training at teacher training colleges (TTCs). It is only recently that the intake was made possible by systematically enlarging the facilities of the existing teacher training facilities and by building additional TTCs.

Nowadays, the First Approach is carried out in the Open and Distance Learning Program (ODL), and the Second Approach—shortening the duration of the residential program—is implemented in the form of the Initial Primary Teacher Education Program (IPTE). The implementation of these two types of pre-service teacher education programs appears to be a challenge: the ODL program enrolled its first cohort in 2010. Even though two 2-3 week sessions already took place, the enrolled teachers have not yet been given the curriculum for the entire program. But the ODL program is not alone with suffering from problems with implementation: the IPTE program consists of one residential year and one practice year. For a variety of reasons, the second year is poorly implemented and it is not out of the extraordinary that practice students are left on their own during their second year of teaching. Thus, in effect the IPTE program is for many a one-year pre-service teacher education program. This means that in effect, second year IPTE students are hired at a lower salary than qualified teachers without getting the necessary support to develop professional competencies at their workplace. Observing how teacher training has over the years systematically deteriorated, it is only a matter of time that the second IPTE year will be either completely abolished or further reduced from one year to a few months only. It is clear that not much was learnt from the folly of the previous courses. In fact, the TTCs themselves do not quite understand why the second IPTE year should be "that long." The second year of IPTE seems to be under attack from various sides, including from TTCs themselves.

It is argued in this report that doing more of the same would further compromise teacher quality. This applies for both approaches that are currently pursued: Further reducing the duration of the residential program (IPTE) or breaking down the academic course of study into shorter bits and pieces and spreading it out over a 2 or 3 year program (ODL) without having a well-thought out mentoring system in place at school level, will further diminish the quality of a teacher education system that suffers from a low quality.

Compared to other countries in the region, pre-service teacher education in Malawi already is at a bare minimum with regard to duration. Therefore the attention of this report is on a third approach that, similar to the other two approaches, would increase the supply and the quality of teachers. In contrast to the other strategies, however, the third approach does not diminish teacher quality, benefits the individual teacher and is, due to its cost-effectiveness, sustainable.
The three strategic approaches to increasing teacher supply are depicted in figure 3.

**Figure 3: Three Strategic Approaches to Improving Teacher Supply**

In a context where teacher shortage is significant, it is a matter of simultaneously pursuing multiple approaches to increasing teacher supply. Thus, it is not suggested to replace one approach with another. In fact, the argument is made here that greater attention to efficiency would ensure that the two other strategies – upgrading practicing teachers and increasing intake in pre-service teacher training colleges—are implemented more systematically. In addition, efficiency-oriented strategies would help to eliminate some of the root causes for the shortage of qualified teachers: the attrition and underutilization of qualified teachers.

### 1.3. Focus on Teacher Quality

For the past few years, the effectiveness of educational reforms—including those that have been funded with assistance from development partners—is typically measured in terms of whether a reform has indeed enhanced student outcomes. Obviously, the gross enrollment ratio alone is not a sufficient indicator for measuring progress in direction of universal primary completion. In many developing countries, including in Malawi, too many students repeat and too many drop out over the course of primary education. In addition, time on task, opportunity to learn, and other concepts have helped to shape our understanding of what matters for student learning. Within the body of literature that explores the determinants of student learning, teacher effects score high for explaining how much or how little, respectively, students learn.

The shift from access to quality is reflected in the title of the current DFID education strategy 2010-2015 *Learning for All*. The demand to use student outcomes as the ultimate
measure to determine the accomplishments of a reform, project, or initiative is also propelled in reports of other development partners (EFA GMR 2005, OECD 2005, World Bank IEG 2006). As a corollary, great attention has been directed towards innovation at the school and classroom level, and as a result, to teachers. Governments and development partners in sub-Saharan Africa and in other developing countries have not been alone in tackling the challenge of how to best recruit graduates into teaching, develop effective teachers, and then retain them on the job. The shortage of qualified and effective teachers is a global phenomenon and has led numerous organizations, ranging from OECD (2005) to McKinsey (2007, 2010), to place teacher related issues on the top of their agendas.

The literature on teacher education in Malawi is voluminous. For example, the early Multi-Site Teacher Education Research (MUSTER) studies led to a series of important findings on teacher education in Malawi, published in 1999 and 2000. Another early comparative study, entitled The Utilization, Deployment and Management of Teachers in Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda was produced by Gabrielle Göttelmann-Duret and Joe Hogan (1998) with funding from the German Foundation for International Development. Another important study, funded from German sources (KFW Entwicklungsbank), focuses on a few key areas including on the high repetition rates in primary school and on the structure of the teacher salary in Malawi (Katharina Michaelowa and Annika Wechtler, 2006). In addition, the country reports of the comparative studies of the Southern and Eastern Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) present intriguing findings on how teacher quality and student outcomes are related (Chimombo, Kunje, Chimuzu and Mchikoma 2005). Finally, as a rule, each and every analytical report, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and funded by the World Bank or other development partners deals, in one way or the other, with teacher education and teacher supply. The sector reviews and strategies as well as the appraisal documents for large grants or loans, including the EFA Fast Track Initiative, address teacher shortage. The three strategic priorities of the National Education Sector Plan 2009-2013 (MoEST 2009; EFA-FTI 2009) are inextricably linked with teacher supply and quality. The three priorities target an improvement in three key areas:

- quality and relevance of education
- access to, and equity in, education
- governance and management of education delivery

The National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development 2007 – 2017 (NSTED) provides a sub-sector review and proposes a list of reform measures that deals with teacher education and development, teacher management, as well as financing of pre-service and in-service teacher training for primary and secondary school.

In addition to the analytical reports, listed in the previous paragraph, three recently carried out studies deserve special mention here:

1.4. Organization of the ESARO Study on Teachers

As mentioned in the previous section, this report examines the efficiency in

- recruiting the three target groups (secondary school graduates, TTC students, newly qualified teachers) into the teaching profession
- utilizing qualified teachers appropriately in terms of load, length, conditions, modality of work
- retaining qualified and motivated teachers in the profession

The UNICEF ESARO Study on Teachers in Malawi draws on three types of data: (1) desk review, (2) interview with experts, government officials, representatives of development partners, and a few schools, and (3) a survey in two divisions. This report represents volume 1 of the study and exclusively draws on the desk review as well as interviews with a few key individuals from the education sector. Volume 2 will present the findings from the empirical study in two educational divisions. The lead co-author for volume 1 is Gita Steiner-Khamsi, and the lead co-author for volume 2 is Demis Kunje.

Notes on authors: Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Professor of Comparative and International Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.

Demis Kunje, Senior Researcher, Center for Educational Research and Training, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Zomba.
2. Background and Contextual Information

2.1. Structure of the Educational System

The following sections briefly sketch the structures of the general education as well as teacher education systems.

2.1.1. General Education

This study focuses on teachers for primary education. Primary education lasts eight years and secondary four years. There are three standardized exit examinations at critical stages of general education:

- Primary school: standards 1 – 8. The learners exist primary school after standard 8 with the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE).
- Lower secondary school: forms 1-2, leading to a Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) after completion of two years of secondary education.
- Upper secondary school: forms 3-4. The Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) is given to students who completed four years of secondary education.

Figure 4: Standardized Exit Examinations in General Education
2.1.2. Teacher Education for Primary School

Currently, there are two certificate programs in place for the teacher training of primary teachers:

- The IPTE program (Initial Primary Teacher Education) was initiated in 2006 and is organized as follows: a full academic year in residence at the teacher training college (TTC), followed by a full practicum year in school. This model of pre-service teacher education is commonly referred to as: 1+1 model.
- The ODL program (Open and Distance Learning) was launched in 2010 to address the severe teacher shortage. As mentioned in the previous section, it periodically gathers ODL students at the TTCs for training sessions. The ODL students work throughout the year as (unqualified) teachers and only attend the TTC for the duration of the training sessions, held during the term breaks of the TTCs when the boarding facilities are vacated. The training is stretched over a period of 2-3 years, but is shorter in terms of actual contact hours than the IPTE program. Even though the details of the ODL program were not determined at the time of this study, it is anticipated that each training session will typically last 2-3 weeks.

Figure 5: The Two Currently Offered Teacher Training Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open &amp; Distance Learning (ODL)</th>
<th>Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At TTC: 2-3 week training over 2-3 years</td>
<td>At TTC: first year full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school: work rest of the time as unqualified teachers</td>
<td>At school: during second year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission requirement: Pass in English, Grade in math and 1 science subject</td>
<td>Admission requirement: Grade(credit) in English, math and 1 science subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The entry requirement for the two current teacher education programs is the MSCE, that is, 12 years of general education. The admission requirement for enrollment in the ODL program is less rigorous than for the residential program IPTE: only a pass rather than a (credit) grade is required for English.

2.2. Schools by Type and Location

Most primary schools in Malawi are free public schools. Only 5.5 percent or 298 out of 5,404 primary schools are tuition-carrying private schools. The remaining 94.5 percent mark up public schools for which either the Government (38.5 percent) or a religious agency (61.5 percent) is listed as the proprietor (EMIS 2010).
Close to 93 percent of all schools are located in a rural area. Table 1 lists primary schools by education division and location.

### Table 1: Number of Primary Schools by Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Division</th>
<th>Rural Area</th>
<th>Semi-Urban</th>
<th>Urban Area</th>
<th>Grant Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Eastern</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Western</td>
<td>1,052</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>1,224</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Eastern</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Western</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,013</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
<td><strong>320</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,404</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EMIS (2010), table 2.1

The characteristics of secondary schools vary considerably from primary schools. Overall their number is small: only every fifth school in Malawi (20.8 percent) is a secondary school, offering grades 9-10 (Form 1-2) or 9-12 (Form 1-4). Of the 1,127 secondary schools, one-quarter or 25 percent are private schools. This is in stark contrast to primary schools where the proportion of private schools amounts to merely 5.5 percent. This means that the private sector owns and/or administers a relatively sizeable proportion of secondary schools.

The growth of the private secondary school sector is also visible in the number of enrollments. The enrollment in private secondary schools has doubled over the past ten years. In 2009, close to a quarter million students (243,838 students) attended forms 1-4. Twenty-two percent of them (53,742 students) were enrolled in private secondary schools (EMIS 2010).

Historically, secondary schools and technical-vocational schools used to be boarding schools, located in the outskirts of urban or semi-urban areas. Nowadays, many of them have been converted into day schools without boarding to accommodate a greater number of students. Students in public secondary schools either enroll in these day schools, called Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), or in the Conventional Secondary Schools (CSSs) that offer boarding. Approximately sixty percent of the students attend CDSS, one-quarter attend CSSs, and only 13 percent of secondary students are enrolled in grant-aided or religious secondary schools (EMIS 2010; World Bank 2010). The most widespread type of secondary schools, the Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS), has the lowest ratio of qualified teachers. Only every fifth teacher in CDSSs is qualified to teach at secondary level; all other teachers are either trained at primary level or under-qualified in other ways.

Two institutions provide training, mostly using the distance mode, for under qualified teachers in secondary school: the University of Malawi, Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education.
2.3. Access and Completion by Gender and Socio-Economic Status

Gender inequality exists. It is pronounced at secondary level where girls only comprise 44.2 percent of the secondary school population.

Gender disparity at primary level decreased over the past two decades. The ratio of girls to boys in primary school steadily improved from 0.87 in 1992 to 0.91 in 2000 and further to 0.995 in 2007 (EFA-FTI 2009: 6). However, as the Country Status Report accurately points out, gender disparity varies from one level to another. It starts out with a parity index of 1.04 in the first four standards of primary school and then continuously drops and reaches the low parity level of 0.67 in the two last forms of upper secondary school. In other words, access is not an issue but dropout is an issue, especially for girls.

Figure 6 illustrates the poor completion rates in schools, in particular in primary school. More than half of the learners drop out by the end of primary school. Only 45 percent of boys complete standard 8. The completion rate is even lower for girls at 31 percent.

Figure 6: Access and Completion of the Different Levels by Gender

![Graph showing access and completion rates by gender](image)


The disparity by gender (figure 6) is considerable. In comparison, the disparity by wealth quintile is even more pronounced (figure 7). As figure 7 illustrates 67 percent of learners in the highest wealth quintile complete primary and more than half of them (59 percent) who enrolled in school continue in lower secondary. In total, 31 percent of learners in the top wealth category complete upper secondary school. Even though the completion rates for children from wealthy households are low compared to other countries in the region, the completion rates are scandalously low for all the other four quintiles. It is accurate to
assume that the first wealth quintile enrolls the children in private schools where the teacher-student ratio is smaller, repetition rates lower, and completion rates higher.

In comparison: three-quarter of learners in the poorest quintile drop out over the course of primary school and only 23 percent complete standard 8. Of those, less than half continue with schooling at secondary level. Finally, only two percent of children from the 5th wealth quintile graduate with a Malawi School Certificate of Examination (MSCE), that is, complete form 4 of upper secondary school.

Figure 7: Access and Completion of the Different Levels by Wealth Quintile


2.4. Health and Education

Malnutrition prevalence is the highest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region with 44 percent of pre-school children experiencing stunted growth. MoEST estimates that at the peak of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Malawi, 7,500 teachers died of AIDS in 2001 (MoEST NSTED 2008). Even though the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been actively combatted, it continues to impact the sector. Children orphaned by AIDS represent 7 percent of the children under 17 years old (EFA-FTI 2009). Deaths of teachers but also prolonged sick-leaves of HIV/AIDS infected teachers continue to constitute challenges for the teacher management system.
2.5. Key Challenges for Primary Education

There seems to be agreement on what the key challenges are in primary education. The following five challenges, listed in the Country Status Report (World Bank 2010), are also found in other analytical reports and official documents.

2.5.1. Increasing the amount of public resources

The recurrent education expenditure allocated to primary education is only 32 percent. It is below the African average of 44 percent and the recommended standard of 60 percent, promoted in the EFA FTI Indicative Framework. The greatest beneficiary of the low allocation to the education sector is the higher education sector. The student-teacher ratio of 11 : 1 in higher education in Malawi is, according to the CSR, lower than the average ratio of OECD countries of 16 : 1. In stark contrast, the ratio is 80 : 1 for primary education in Malawi, twice the average value of the countries in the Southern African Development Community. Other countries in the region, such as, for example, Swaziland, have been criticized for pursuing a pro-rich funding policy. Given the low survival rate in general education of the four lowest wealth quintiles—with a bare two percent of the poorest quintile completing upper secondary education—the generous public expenditures for higher education mainly benefit the richest quintile in the country.

2.5.2. Reducing the high dropout rates

The low completion rates in general, but for girls and poor children in particular, have been presented in the previous section. Dropout in primary school is complex. There are many factors that contribute to the low completion rates, notably, the unavailability of teachers, classrooms, and/or supplies to create an environment that is conducive to learning. The student-classroom ratio is 117:1 (EFA-FTI 2009: 10) forcing many teachers to teach their class in the open air or under a tree, respectively, or worse encouraging teachers to combine their classes into a large group of 150 students and more and co-teach the group. Furthermore, some primary schools have remained incomplete, that is, are not able to offer the full range of primary school standards 1-8. Thus, beyond concerns of quality and relevance, stated above, difficult access to the higher cycle of primary education or lower secondary school\(^2\) is also a factor that contributes to dropout.

The high dropout rates are reflected in the low completion rates, presented in Figures 6 and 7. The comparison of educational pyramids for Malawi and Sub-Saharan Africa also

\(^2\) Research suggests that expanding lower secondary education boosts completion rates in primary school; increased availability and access at the lower secondary level seems to motivate parents to have their children complete primary school (World Bank, 2005). This suggests that a critical mass of lower secondary schools may be needed to attain universal primary completion, with estimates indicating that at least 35 percent secondary net enrollment is necessary to achieve over 90 percent primary net enrollment.
manifests the above average dropout rate, starting in primary and continuing at all levels of the education system.

**Figure 8: Educational Pyramids for Malawi and Sub-Saharan Africa**

- **Malawi**
  - Tertiary: 52 students/100,000 inhabitants
  - Technical-Vocational: 2% of total secondary
  - Upper Secondary: 14%
  - Lower Secondary: 18%
  - Primary: 101%

- **Sub-Saharan Africa**
  - Tertiary: 538 students/100,000 inhabitants
  - Technical-Vocational: 6% of total secondary
  - Upper Secondary: 25%
  - Lower Secondary: 47%
  - Primary: 99%

Source: CSR (2010), figure 1.

### 2.5.3. Raising the level of student achievement

In the standardized exam of SACMEQ II, Malawi scored lowest of all the countries in English reading and next to last in mathematics.

In addition to the regional SACMEQ tests, the three national examination pass rates also provide an opportunity to draw conclusions on the quality of education. In all three standardized exit examinations, private schools in Malawi score higher than public schools; mostly because private schools attract students from wealthier households. The following Table 2 compares the pass rates on the standardized exit examinations PSLE, JCE, and MSCE for students from public and private schools.

**Table 2: Examination Pass Rates by Type of School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PSLE After Standard 8</th>
<th>JCE After Form 2</th>
<th>MSCE After Form 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass Rate%</strong></td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The low pass rates are striking for upper secondary school. This applies especially to public schools. A breakdown by type of public schools reveals that two-thirds of CDSS students fail the MSCE test. In comparison, the CSS manage to bring 8 out of 10 students to JCE graduation and 1 out of 2 to a MSCE pass rate.

The Country Status Report (World Bank 2010) draws attention to the gap between the official and actual instructional time. According to the report, an estimated 20 percent of teaching time is lost due to teacher absenteeism. Furthermore, 16 percent of schools use overlapping shifts burdening teachers with unmanageable class sizes.

2.5.4. Reducing the repetition rate

The introduction of free primary education has boosted the repetition rate in primary level. The repetition rate of 20 percent combined with the finding that repeaters tend to drop out of schools has led economists to calculate the wastage of public resources that results from paying for repeaters or schooling for students who will not complete the cycle. According to the EFA-FTI calculations, the system requires 23 student years to produce 1 graduate from standard 8, instead of 8 years. The internal efficiency coefficient, listed in the Education Sector Implementation Plan (MoEST 2009: 18), is at the very low level of 35 percent. This means, that 65 percent of the public expenditures for education are used either for repeated years or for schools years of students who are dropping out before completing the grade.

The age distribution in forms 1-4 illustrates the wide age range of students in secondary school. Students in these forms are supposed to be in the age group 14-17 but as table 3 demonstrates more than half of them are 3-4 years older.

Table 3: Age Distribution in Secondary School by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Form 1</th>
<th>Form 2</th>
<th>Form 3</th>
<th>Form 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>768</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3086</td>
<td>3861</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>1425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>6589</td>
<td>8204</td>
<td>3956</td>
<td>5273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>8590</td>
<td>8550</td>
<td>7600</td>
<td>8632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>7976</td>
<td>5782</td>
<td>8950</td>
<td>8700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5134</td>
<td>2535</td>
<td>8127</td>
<td>5671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>2624</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>5295</td>
<td>3043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>2627</td>
<td>1188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1151</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36559</td>
<td>31609</td>
<td>39914</td>
<td>35083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The shaded cells highlight the correct age group for each form. In form 4, the last year of secondary school, for example, only 17 percent of boys (5,467 students) and 25 percent of girls (5,423) are at the correct age group, that is, 17 years old. Most boys and girls are, due to repetition, over age.

In an attempt to curb repetition and, as a corollary, dropout, several other countries in the region have tackled the issue by limiting, by decree, the repetition rate. Swaziland, for example, systematically enforced a ceiling of 10 percent repetitions for each standard of primary school.

2.5.5. Reducing the teacher-learner ratio

Last but not least, for the past fifteen years the reduction of the high teacher-learner ratio has been an ongoing concern and was placed on the top of the agenda of priorities. In fact, this ESARO UNICEF study exclusively focuses on this particular strategic priority.

Schools in the urban districts succeed to attract a greater number of teachers and therefore have considerable lower ratios. For example, the student/teacher ratio (for all teachers, that is, qualified and unqualified teachers) in Lilongwe City is only 62 students as opposed to 273 students in the Mchinji district (EMIS 2010: 30).

It is important to note that the high teacher-student ratio is exclusively a problem for primary school. In fact, for secondary and higher education the contrary applies. Teacher-student ratios are well below the regional average; a fact that explains the relative high cost for secondary and higher education at the expense of primary education.

The Country Status Report (World Bank, 2010, p. 46) convincingly highlights the disparity with regard to teacher-student ratios, depending on the level of education. Compared to the SADC and SSA averages, the education sector in Malawi is considerable above—in fact double—the teacher-student ratios in public schools. The SADC average is 41 students per teachers, whereas in Malawi the ratio is 80 students per teacher (and over 110 students if only qualified teachers are considered). However, when it comes to secondary and tertiary education, the education sector in Malawi is slightly below the SADC average and has almost half the teacher-student ratios in higher education of the average in SSA countries. Table 4 compares the teacher-student ratios by level in Malawi with those in countries of SADC and SSA.

Table 4: Teacher-Student Ratios in Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary Education</th>
<th>Secondary Education</th>
<th>Higher Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC Average</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSA Average</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2003, a first projection on how to increase teacher supply was carried out and the ratio of students to qualified teachers (T_q), was targeted at 1 : 60 by the year 2012 (see MoEST, NSTED 2008, chapter 2). By the time the National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development was formulated, the target of 1T_q : 60 students was postponed by five years, that is, moved from 2012 to 2015. The Country Status Report, developed two years later, estimates that the two approaches to increasing the number of qualified primary teachers (training by distance mode, increasing intake in TTCs) will yield the required teacher supply only by the year 2017 (World Bank 2010: 254). There are different target figures circulating within one and the same Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. Another target, put forward by the DTED was a qualified teacher-student ratio of 1 : 60 by 2013 and 1 : 40 by 2017. Information on the projected and targeted ratio is contradictory and is not clear at this moment what the target is.

The projections have been continuously corrected based on the number of enrollments and certifications in the two teacher training modes.

It is likely that that the projections need to be corrected once again for a variety of reasons, including the following:

- The first ODL cohort (began with their studies in 2010) was projected at 4,000 students, but only 3,807 students were admitted.
- At the time of data collection for this study (January 2011), the applications for the second ODL cohort were available and DTED was in the process of setting up the interviews with the eligible applicants. There were problems with locally recruiting ODL students as some of the DEMs (district education managers) were not able to facilitate the recruitment process as expected. As a result, the number of applicants for the second ODL cohort was much smaller (approximately 18,000 applicants) than the ones for the first cohort (approximately 22,000 applicants). There was a concern at DTED whether a sufficient number of qualified applicants could be retrieved from the pool of applicants to meet the target of 4,000 students.
- The non-residential program of the IPTE program—projected to yield an annual output of 500 newly qualified teachers is unpopular and is unlikely to continue in the current (non-regulated) form.
- The attrition during the IPTE pre-service teacher education program rose in the last two IPTE cohorts that completed their studies. Averaged over the IPTE cohorts 1-4 the attrition rate is 15 percent. That is, from the 12,531 teacher trainees that enrolled in IPTE 1, 2, 3, or 4, only 10,640 survived their studies and received a certificate at the end of the two-year program.
3. Characteristics of the Primary Teaching Force

3.1. Gender and Age

Sixty percent of primary teachers are men. The overrepresentation by male teachers applies especially to schools in rural areas where 82 percent of the population resides. It is only in the two large cities—Lilongwe City and Blantyre City—where female teachers outnumber male teachers. Table 4 highlights the two divisions/districts with the highest gender disparity:

- In the rural divisions Central Eastern and Shire Highlights 30 percent of teachers are women.
- In the two city districts Lilongwe City and Blantyre City 75-80 percent of teachers are women.

Table 5: Number of Primary Teachers by Gender and Divisions/Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Female Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Eastern</td>
<td>4831</td>
<td>2259</td>
<td>7090</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>3590</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>5210</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lilongwe City</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>2177</td>
<td>2718</td>
<td>80.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blantyre City</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td>2390</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (nationwide)</td>
<td>27582</td>
<td>17925</td>
<td>45507</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMIS (2010), table 3.

Female teachers tend to have their request for deployment to urban or semi-urban approved if they succeed to make a case for family related reasons or for the lack of adequate housing in rural areas.

In an attempt to increase the enrollment and to reduce the dropout of girls, MoEST and the DTED have launched several initiatives to attract and a greater number of female secondary school graduates to teacher training. Several development partners, in particular Scottish Aid and UNICEF, have supported the Ministry of Education for recruiting female secondary graduates as teaching assistants or for enrolling women in teacher training, respectively.

It is remarkable that no information on the age of the teachers is collected in Malawi. The only information available stems from small non-representative samples of other studies. Kunje (2010) presents findings from other studies where the age of teachers was recorded: One of the studies examined the professional development of 60 science teachers in secondary schools of the South Western Education Division (Mwanza, 2007) and found that 56 percent of the teachers were in the 25-34 age range and 41 percent in the 35-49 age range. Civil servants are eligible for pension at the age of fifty or after twenty years of
service. Given the early retirement age, it is not surprising that the majority of teachers are under 35 years old.

3.2. Qualification

Two types of information are relevant to assess the formal qualification of teachers: academic qualification and type of teacher training.

*Academic qualification:*

- PSLE: Teachers with a Primary School Leaving Examination (8 years of schooling)
- JCE: Teachers with a Junior Certificate Examination (10 years of schooling)
- MSCE: Teachers with a Malawi School Certificate of Examination (12 years of schooling)

According to EMIS (2010, table 17.2), 65 percent of primary school teachers in public schools completed upper secondary school and passed the Malawi School Certificate of Education. However, there is reason why this ratio should be called into question and why figure 9 should be interpreted with caution: one of the reasons why MIITEP was vehemently criticized and eventually suspended was its lack of diligence with enforcing the academic prerequisites for admission. Reportedly, applicants were admitted into the distance learning program who only graduated from lower secondary school or only completed form 4 of upper secondary school but did not pass the MSCE.

**Figure 9: Primary School Teachers by Academic Qualifications**

![Pie chart showing distribution of teacher qualifications](image)

Source: EMIS (2010), table 17.2.
Type of teacher training:

- 1 year training, offered 1993-1997
- 2 year training, traditional program – was in effect until 1993
- IPTE (1+1 model), offered since 2005
- MASTEP, 3 years distance-learning training program (offered until 1993)
- MIITEP, offered 1997-2003

In addition, EMIS also lists the following response categories: on training, unknown, and untrained. Figure 10 provides statistical information on the type of training that primary school teachers have had.

Figure 10: Primary Teachers by Training

![Graph showing the distribution of training types among primary teachers]

Source: EMIS (2010), table 17.1

Even though only 3 percent of the teaching force at primary level is untrained, a closer examination of the training background of the remaining 97 percent may provide important clues for explaining the low learning outcomes of students. We suggest to move beyond the trained/untrained dichotomy and instead identify teacher training qualifications that, compared with the region, are considered sub-standard or unsatisfactory. Compared with other countries in the region, only teachers with the 2-year teacher training certificate, the IPTE certificate and MASTEP, amounting in total to 36 percent of the teaching force, should be regarded as having had an adequate teacher training. This means that two-third of the teaching force would need additional training to become effective teachers.

In retrospect, the MIITEP program should be considered a transitional rather than a terminal certificate that was instated in a state of emergency in response to the rampant teacher shortage in the mid-1990s. In the period 1997-2003, 23,419 unqualified primary teachers have been trained and certified through MIITEP (MoEST/NSTED 2008).

In other words, the education sector should not consider 97 percent of the teaching force as trained but rather develop programs to upgrade the qualifications of those 64 percent of the
teaching force that have had a sub-standard or insufficient training. The absence of rigorous upgrading training programs for teachers that are in service is remarkable.

### 3.3. Status

The majority of teachers are civil servants. They are hired in the following salary categories:

- **P8**: primary head teacher
- **T1**: chief primary school teacher (PT1)
- **TJ**: principal primary school teacher (PT2)
- **TK**: senior primary school teacher (PT3)
- **TL**: primary school teacher (PT4)
- **TM**: Teacher trainees, that is, ODL students

Volunteers are hired to assist in schools with a sizeable teacher shortage. As expected, almost all of them work in rural schools and the majority of them (96 percent) is hired by the local community. Teacher trainees or ODL students are hired in the salary category. Since the establishments for ODL or teacher trainees were only created on April 1, 2009, they are not listed in the table below.

#### Table 6: Teachers by Grade and Division in Public Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>P8</th>
<th>PT1</th>
<th>PT2</th>
<th>PT3</th>
<th>PT4</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Month ~To- Month</th>
<th>Volunteer</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Eastern</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>1232</td>
<td>4348</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>7090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Western</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>2075</td>
<td>7282</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>12110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>1458</td>
<td>4582</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>8115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>939</td>
<td>3423</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>5210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Eastern</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>4124</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>6328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Western</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>1340</td>
<td>3552</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>6631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaggregated for P</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>2396</td>
<td>8011</td>
<td>27311</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>1646</td>
<td>3824</td>
<td>45484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregated Total</td>
<td>38335</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>1261</td>
<td>1646</td>
<td>3824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMIS (2010), table 17.3.
The education sector employed 45,484 teachers for public schools in 2009. 84.3 percent of them were hired as civil servant. A small percentage of the teachers (3.7 percent) were either hired on a temporary basis or on a month-to-month basis. Teachers hired on a month-to-month basis are typically retired teachers who were brought back to school to fill vacancies. Starting in 2003, retired teachers were actively recruited to return to schools and teach. They are eligible to teach, on a month-to-month basis up to two years and until the age of 65.

A breakdown by grade (salary category) in table 6 reveals a large ratio of teachers in the lowest grade PT4: 71.2 percent of those teachers that are hired as civil servants have never been promoted. The Teaching Service Commission is in charge of promotions. It has been reinstated in 2008 after a period of 2-3 in which no promotions were considered because the previous agency in charge of promotion reviews was dismantled. Nowadays, the opportunity to apply for promotion is publicly announced. Besides submitting information on formal qualification and years of teaching experience, the applicant must pass an interview. In the last round of promotions, 1,800 PT3 teachers applied for 1,000 openings at the grade PT 2.

The reasons for not being promoted from PT4 to PT3, or for any other grade to a higher grade, respectively, range from

- Lack of teaching experience (too junior)
- Insufficient qualification (no MSCE Certificate)
- Limited posts in the higher grade and therefore highly selective promotion criteria

Each grade consists of six notches or salary steps. Promotion from one notch to the next is exclusively determined by years of service. In other words: the likelihood of getting promoted from one grade to another is so small that a teacher, in effect, reaches after five years the salary ceiling. The extremely short career ladder and the lack of performance criteria for promotion are problematic.

### 3.4. Salary

On April 1, 2009, the Government of Malawi approved 4,000 additional posts for primary teacher trainees. These newly created posts have been reserved for ODL students. As mentioned above, their salary is assigned the grade M (clerical/technical assistant) and it consists of seven notches, ranging from 172,092 to 190,308 MK.3

The salaries for the teachers with civil service status, PT 1-4, are listed in table 7.

**Table 7: Salaries of Primary Teachers by Grade and Notch**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MK Currency</th>
<th>Lowest Notch</th>
<th>Highest Notch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PT 1 (T1)</td>
<td>739,860</td>
<td>799,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT 2 (T1)</td>
<td>462,588</td>
<td>568,488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the sizeable increase in salary from one grade to the next, the salaries within each grade are relatively compressed. This reconfirms the assessment made earlier that there are few material incentives for qualified teachers to remain in the teaching profession longer than 5 years, let alone build a life career as a teacher.

It was a recurring demand over the past few years to grant a salary for teachers working in remote rural areas. The supplement of 5,000 MK/month was finally introduced in July 2010 and is indeed granted to teachers in schools that are situated in a remote rural location. The teacher salary as a multiple of the average GDP per capita is above the average of 3.5 as a multiple of the average GDP per capita, recommended in the EFA FTI Indicative Framework. Most of the teachers are hired in grade PT4 (PL) and their salary corresponds to a multiple of 5.5 of the average GDP per capita (World Bank 2010: 241). The teacher salary is considered attractive but the work conditions—due to class sizes and poorly equipped classrooms and school facilities—and living conditions in rural areas are considered unattractive.

### 3.5. Attrition

There is a lack of data on college-to-work transition for newly qualified teachers. That is, there is no data available on how many graduates from teacher training colleges actually were deployed to a school and actually hired/paid. There are three different units within the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology that deal with graduation (Department of Teacher Education and Development), placement (Department of Basic Education), and capture of newly qualified teachers (Directorate of Human Resource Management). In other words, there is no data on the attrition that occurs immediately following graduation or the first 2-5 years after graduation that are generally considered a critical period for attrition.

The only data made available is the attrition statistics from EMIS (2010). The officially reported attrition rate is very low: 3.2 percent and the main reason (over one-third) is death. At the same time, it is common knowledge that it is difficult to retain teachers in remote rural areas. The number of teachers that transfer from rural schools to urban/semi-urban or to private schools is not recorded. Arguably, these types of transfers should be interpreted as a form of attrition from the angle of rural schools.

| PT 3 (TK) | 331,164 | 404,304 |
| PT 4 (TL) | 253,548 | 278,148 |

Source: Circular No. HRM/RS/01, 8 September 2009, Secretariat of Public Service Management.
4. The Third Approach: Reducing Inefficiencies

This chapter identifies a few areas where qualified teachers are lost, under-utilized, demotivated, or are in other ways used inefficiently. It is argued that qualified teachers are a rare human resource in Malawi and putting policies and mechanisms in place that better serve and use them may constitute a third, possibly more sustainable and cost-effective approach to resolving the teacher shortage crisis in the long run.

4.1. Assessment of Recruitment into Teaching

The educational systems of Singapore and Finland have frequently been cited as effective school systems because the teacher education institutions are very rigorous with selecting the “right” kind of applicants, then provide a high-quality teacher education program, and finally ensure that all those that completed teacher education indeed enter the profession and build a life-long career as teachers. Attrition is minimal and wastage of public resources negligible.

Figure 11: Recruitment into Teaching in Singapore

![Diagram showing the recruitment process in Singapore](chart.png)


In teacher education research, recruitment into teaching is a composite construct that consists of the following indicators:
1. **Admission rate**: Number of applicants admitted to a teacher training diploma or degree program

2. **Enrollment rate**: Number of admitted applicants that actually enroll in a pre-service teacher training diploma or degree program

3. **Completion rate**: Number of teacher training students completing their 3-year of 4-year training program

4. **Transition rate**: Number of graduates accepting a teaching position upon graduation from teacher training

5. **Retention rate of NQT**: Number of newly qualified teachers (NQT) that remain on the post two years (or five years) after graduation.

In Malawi there exists data on the first three indicators, but not on the last two.

*Indicators 1, 2, 3*.The database of DTED is impressive and covers information on the first three indicators. It has collected this information for all five IPTE cohorts as well as the first two ODL cohorts.

**Admission rate.** Admission to pre-service education is very selective and in fact would be comparable to high-performing countries where only a small number of applicants are admitted to teacher education. The admission rate in Malawi is 15-20 percent, depending on the cohort in IPTE and ODL. For example, approximately 27,000 applied for the IPTE 2 program. Of those 16,000 were deemed eligible based on their academic credentials but only 2,500 could be offered a seat. The newly instated ODL program is even more popular. For the first ODL cohort, 22,000 applications were deemed eligible but only 3,807 were admitted, that is, the admission rate was 17.3 percent. Eligibility for enrollment in IPTE is based on the following four criteria (see Malawi Institute of Education 2006: 20 and World Bank 2010: 253):

- Possess a Malawi School Certificate of Education with credit passes in English, mathematics and one science subject (biology, physical science, general science) or its equivalent.
- Not to be more than 35 years of age
- Be ready to work in rural areas
- Pass an aptitude test in numerical, communication and reasoning skills.

**Enrollment and completion rate.** In the following, we present data on indicators 2 (enrollment rate) and 3 (completion rate) on those cohorts that completed their degree, that is, on the IPTE cohorts 1 – 4.
Figure 12: Attrition Rate in the IPTE Cohorts 1-4

Source: DTED 2011, database.

For illustration purposes, the figures 11 and 12 are compared: in the example of Singapore the attrition of teacher education students was at 2 percent minimal, that is, 18 out of 20 teacher education students completed their degree. There is very little loss in human and material resources involved. In Malawi, the attrition rate in the first four IPTE cohorts was fifteen percent: a total of 12,531 students enrolled in IPTE 1, 2, 3 or 4 but only 10,640 of them completed their studies by passing the teaching practice in Year 2.

Indicators 4 and 5: transition rate and retention rate. As mentioned above, there is no data on these two indicators. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of recruitment into teaching is at the moment not measurable because two of the five indicators—indicator 4 and 5—are not applied in Malawi. As mentioned before, three different units within the Ministry of Education deal with college-work transition making it impossible to obtain accurate data to calculate the transition rate. All three units (DTED, Department of Basic Education, Directorate of Human Resource Management) claim that there is only minimal attrition involved at the moment of transition from college to work given that the newly qualified teachers are centrally assigned to a school. For example, according to the Directorate of Human Resources, there were 3,500 recruits from the IPTE 3 cohort of which 3,469 were “introduced,” that is, signed the contract (GP1 form) suggesting a retention rate of 99.1 percent or a college-work attrition rate of 0.9 percent, respectively. However, we were not able to systematically collect data that would support the general assessment of a minimal college-work attrition rate empirically. Finally, it is not possible to provide information on the fifth indicator, that is, the retention rate of newly qualified teachers. The officially reported attrition rate suggests an extremely high retention rate. According to EMIS (2010), the annual attrition rate for all teachers (qualified/non qualified) is merely 3.2 percent. As mentioned in the earlier section that dealt with attrition, the figures for teacher attrition appear to be underreported and should be interpreted with caution.
4.2. Underutilization of Teacher Education Lecturers

The ratio student-lecturer at university level is with 11 : 1 very low (see section 2.5.1. and table 4 in this report). The numbers differ for the various TTC depending on whether they increased in recent years the intake of teacher education students.

At Blantyre TTC, for example, the ratio is currently much higher that the average due to the non-residential track that was introduced last year: 57 lecturers work at Blantyre TTC (25 female, 32 male lecturers) and 907 teacher education students (606 males, 240 females) are currently enrolled. The ratio of 16 : 1 at Blantyre TTC is reasonable compared to teacher education institutions in other countries. However, the quality of teacher education still suffers from a far too large class size and a too fragmented and full teacher education curriculum: The class size at Blantyre TTC is 45-50 students. In addition, the weekly schedule of 32 hours leaves very little time for independent work of students, reading/writing and other academic activities that should be characteristic of a higher education degree.

There are three factors that account for the underutilization of teacher education lecturers at other TTCs: low enrollment of students, low teaching load of lecturers, and low acceptance of the non-residential program.

4.2.1. Low Intake of Teacher Education Students

The biggest problem lies with physical constraints, that is, the lack of classrooms and, more importantly, the lack of boarding facilities to accommodate more students. There is a need to understand why TTCs resist accepting a greater number of non-residential students into their own facility and, if geographic distance should be the issue, why there is no discussion of opening the new institutions that are currently planned as TTCs that offer exclusively a non-residential program. Currently the academic year runs over three terms (each 14 weeks). The facilities are vacated during the term breaks so that the ODL students can be accommodated for instruction and residence.

4.2.2. Low Teaching Load of TTC Lecturers

The lecturers have to teach 12 hours per week and use the remaining time for tutoring and mentoring individual students. It is important to carry out a study to analyze how often students in the residential year (Year 1 of IPTE) and in the practice year (Year 2 of IPTE) are actually mentored or tutored. There are no clear schedules, accountability structures nor objectives for mentoring in place. It was therefore difficult to determine whether individual tutoring mentoring actually is carried out, to what extent and with what outcome.
4.2.3. Low Acceptance of the Non-Residential Program

The intake of pre-service teacher education students could be significantly enhanced with systematically creating the non-residential model in teacher education. Even though NSTED listed the implementation of non-residential teacher education programs as one of the priorities, it seems to be unpopular among the TTCs as well as among the teacher education students.

The experiences at Blantyre TTC are a good case in point. In 2010, in line with the strategy to increase intake by encouraging non-residential students, Blantyre TTC admitted 720 residential students and 200 non-residential students. However, the bed capacity was not increased and remained at 540 students (150 females, 390 males). Even though 200 of the selected applicants were told that they were admitted for the non-residential track, they kept staying, according to the director of the TTC, in the residence hall contributing to serious overcrowding. Apart from Blantyre TTC, Kasunga TTC also admitted 500 non-residential students. It is important to explore in greater detail why the residential program is so unpopular and therefore poorly implemented. Some TTCs are quite far away from an urban or semi-urban center. Therefore, some TTCs lend themselves better than others for introducing a non-residential track based.

There is a need to systematically understand why there is such a low acceptance for the non-residential model and design features of the non-residential program that makes it attractive both to students and to TTCs. It is an opportune moment to do so because, in line with the NSTED to establish at least one primary teacher education college in each educational division (MoEST, 2008), several new TTCs are currently being built. In the medium term it is important to break away from the residential model and have at least one of the newly build TTC offer an attractive “day pre-service teacher education degree,” located in a convenient location and without boarding facilities.

4.3. Underutilization of Teachers

We mentioned in the introductory section of this report several studies that examined the utilization of teachers. There are two studies, in particular, that—in addition to our own observations—have informed our assessment and recommendations in this section of the report: The study on Teacher Deployment, Utilization and Workload in Primary Schools in Malawi, written by Ndalama and Chidalengwa (2010), and an earlier study by Göttelman-Duret and Hogan entitled The utilization, deployment and management of teachers in Botswana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda (1998). Other authors before us have concluded that teachers in Malawi are underutilized with regard to statutory teaching load but also with regard to time on task. In a context where there is rampant teacher shortage, the utilization concern becomes eminent. Therefore, our discussion on the utilization of teachers will also address models of how qualified teachers could be used more effectively (in particular, double-shift and multi-grade teaching) and at the same time boost their income by taking on either additional hours/shifts or additional functions.
4.5.1. Low Contact Hours in Early Primary Cycle

Göttelmann-Duret and Hogan (2008: 10) note the disparity in required contact hours within the primary level. In standards 1 and 2, teachers have 15 hours of contact hours/week with their students, whereas in standards 3-8 it is 26 hours 25 minutes.

Table 8: Contact Hours in Primary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Duration per Period</th>
<th>Periods per Day</th>
<th>Contact Hours per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>6 periods</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
<td>9 periods</td>
<td>26 hours 25 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contact hours for standards 1 and 2 are considerably below Sub-Saharan Africa standards as well as the EFA PTI Indicative Framework of 750-1,000 hours/year.

Civil servants are supposed to work 8.4 hours per day. There is a huge gap that yawns between how much teachers as civil servants are supposed to work and how many hours they actually teach or carry out non-teaching related activities at school.

The schedule of classes is unnecessarily stretched out with short periods (30-35 minutes/period) and too many breaks. The school day for teachers is as follows (NSTED: p. 54):

- Infant teachers teach approximately 3 ½ hours from 7:30 – 11:00
- Junior teachers teach approximately 5 hours from 7:30 – 12:30
- Senior teachers teach for 6 hours from 7:30 – 13:30

In line with the findings of the DFID study, conducted by Ndalama and Chidalengwa (2010:26), it does not seem to be clearly defined what teachers are supposed to do on the school premises besides teaching their classes. There is no conformity between the workload policy and the actual practice of schools where teachers tend to treat the teaching profession as a part-time position confined to only teaching a class in the morning. Against prior expectations, no one seems to take the opportunity of the newly introduced school feeding to allow learners to stay longer in school thus increasing teacher learner contact.

In Malawi, the weekly teaching load (nowadays identical with the number of contact hours) is and the career of teachers and civil servants is short. They are entitled to retirement after 20 years of teaching or at age 60.

4.3.2. Low Acceptance of Double-Shift
There is agreement that the introduction of double-shift in schools with a shortage of teachers and/or classrooms would resolve the burning issue with regard to the high teacher-student ratio with immediate effect and in fact enable the sector to achieve the benchmark of 1:60 teacher-student ratio, or even a smaller ratio, by or even before 2015. The question therefore becomes: why is there such a low acceptance of double-shift?

In educational systems with a shortage of teachers and/or rooms, double-shift is the rule and not the exception. In fact, in double-shift is in many countries very popular among teachers as it permits them to earn an additional income by teaching more hours. In Gambia, teachers receive a double-shift supplement in the amount of 50 percent of their salary and in Zambia teachers can boost their income with an additional 20 percent of their salary by teaching an additional shift (Mulkeen 2010). Göttelmann-Duret and Hogan (1998) note with surprise in their four-country study that the education sector in Malawi rarely uses double-shift, whereas schools in South Africa use the classrooms and teachers both in the mornings and in the afternoons. In Botswana, the Botswana Secondary Teachers Union combatted double-shifts with the argument that it produces lower quality. Double-shift does indeed become a political issue if teachers are not compensated properly for teaching a second shift and if the hours of teaching are compressed to allow for a second shift (Michaelowa 2001). Designed and implemented properly and considering that double-shift enables lower class sizes and better paid teachers, it should be considered as a measure that is both pedagogically desirable, teacher friendly, and cost-effective.

Mark Bray (2008) provides an overview of different double-shift models used in various countries. The greatest distinction that needs to be made is between a double-shift (correctly “end-on shift”) and overlapping shift. The schedule in schools of the Democratic Republic of Congo reflects a typical double-shift schedule. The first group of classes attends school in the morning shift (7:15 – 12:15) and the second group in the afternoon (12:30 – 17:30). In some schools of Malawi, a rare and difficult-to-manage system of overlapping shifts is implemented: students in grades 3, 4 and 5 only come to school when students in grades 1 and 2 leave, but students in grades 6, 7 and 8 overlap with both groups. During those few hours where the groups of students overlap, one group is typically required to work silently or without a teacher physically present to teach them.

Table 9 illustrates the great variation within the country with regard to shift teaching.

**Table 9: Trained Teachers by Shift**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Double</th>
<th>Overlapping</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Eastern</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Western</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1252</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2272</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shire Highlands</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Eastern</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Western</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1469</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5261</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Close to three-quarters of trained primary teachers teach one shift only, 3.7 per cent teach a second shift, and 13.2 percent teaching in an overlapping shift. The Southern Western region, which includes Blantyre City and Blantyre Rural, is the division with the greatest proportion of teachers with double-shift (8.7 percent). The Northern division stands out as the province with a remarkably high ratio of teachers that work in overlapping shifts. Almost every third teacher (32.1 percent) in the Northern division is working in overlapping shifts.

The literature on double-shift is extensive and the praises for it abound. We found only one negative assessment of introducing double-shift in Malawi written by Michaelowa and Wechtler (2006) for the German Development Bank. Their assessment is broad and the reference to their source of information is missing in their report. We do believe that double-shift in Malawi provokes wrong associations and is possibly mistaken with overlapping shifts.

It is difficult to understand the rationale for having primary teachers in standards 1 and 2 teach in classes with a size of 80 students and leaving the classrooms empty in the afternoon. It would take very little effort to introduce a second shift where the same teacher teaches two classes, three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, each with 40 students. There could be shorter or fewer breaks in between the periods so that small children do not have to attend school in the very early morning or very late afternoon hours. In the long run, the contact hours would be extended so that students stay longer in school. In the short run, a double-shift system should be introduced for students in the early grade so that the class sizes in the early grades can be, with nearly immediate effect, reduced to 40-60 students per class.

In one of the schools that we visited, teachers combined their two classes and co-taught the class because of a lack of classrooms. The term “co-teaching” is a misnomer as the teachers tend to divide the teaching hours, depending on the mastery of each teacher for certain subjects. An interesting study on this topic was presented by Chiuye and Kunje (2010). They noted that even when teachers pair up little team teaching goes on. Each teacher prefers to teach a few subjects and is idle or, at times, absent while the other teaches on the rest of the subjects in the day. The combined class size was over 150 students. The teachers preferred to co-teach in a merged huge class rather than teach two shifts. This particular rural school lacked four classrooms; yet, the teachers and head teachers preferred co-teaching over teaching in double-shifts. There are many irrational fears and wrong conceptions—such as the fear of chaos and mismanagement—with regard to double-shifting that could be remedied with the support of the Teachers Union of Malawi and other important stakeholders. There is a need to develop a policy that lays out in detail the organizational details and the conditions for double-shifting including not compromising on the duration of instructional hours and paying teachers extra for the second shift.

At the same time, qualified teachers should be discouraged to “team-teach.” As Ndalama and Chidalengwa (2010) point out, team teaching is both well known and very popular. They found in their study of 58 schools in Malawi that 95 percent supported team teaching “as an appropriate solution to challenges of teacher workload” (p. 51). As mentioned above, the teaching load in Malawi is very small and in fact is considered a morning or part-time job; teachers do not stay on the school premises in the afternoon. Yet, teachers tend to think that they are overworked. Poor working conditions—huge class sizes, lack of supplies and
facilities, low teacher morale—should not be confounded with a high teacher workload. There is no sufficient ground to permit class sizes of 150 learners or more only because teachers like to cover each others’ hours. Unless there are teaching assistants or teacher trainees (IPTE, ODL teachers) involved, there is no reason to approve team-teaching. Team-teaching should be considered as a last resort. It should only be permitted in schools with a shortage of classrooms that despite having introduced double and overlapping shifts still lack classrooms. It is evident that poor working conditions for teachers have compromised professionalism immensely and have distorted the ethical obligations of teachers. Only policy edicts with associated changes in teachers careers can reverse the unprofessional disposition of teachers in regard to work ethics. Recent efforts to reasonably compensate teachers for working in rural areas and teaching double shift is a critical milestone and need to be pursued as a fully fledged policy.

4.3.3. Multi-grade Teaching

Ndalama and Chidalengwa (2010) interviewed in their study 77 teachers and managers, situated in 58 schools across the country. They found that only 41 percent of them heard of multi-grade teaching and of those slightly less than half (48 percent) actually supported the pedagogical concept of multi-grade teaching. MoEST encourages multi-grade teaching in small schools that have small class sizes and has piloted multi-grade teaching. However, there are currently no policy or guidelines in place that would entitle teachers of multiple grades to receive an additional income (recommended: 25% of the monthly salary) and there are no in-service teacher training courses or certificate programs offered for multi-grade teachers. The Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support could be one of the avenues for initializing such in-service courses.

4.4. Retention of Teachers

There are conflicting figures on the attrition of qualified teachers. According to EMIS (2010), the annual attrition rate is 3.2 percent. NSTED presents several figures, ranging from 4.79 percent to 9 percent (MoEST 2008). As mentioned earlier in this report, the attrition rate for public schools is possibly under-reported and deserves greater scrutiny. Attrition is only one of the indicators for teacher dissatisfaction. Another indicator with large pedagogical repercussions is low motivation or low teacher morale. The low teacher morale has been observed and analyzed sufficiently in the context of Malawi (e.g., Ndalama and Chidalengwa 2010, Mulkeen 2010, World Bank 2008). There are several factors that diminish teacher morale; one of them is the perception of a career ceiling.

Currently, the teacher career path is extremely short. Very few teachers succeed to get promoted from the grade PT4 to PT3. In other words, most teachers in the country have achieved the top of their career after five years only. Their salaries are raised all few years along with the salaries of other civil servants, but the raise is a result of inflation and salary adjustments rather than individual performance.
In comparison, the Ministry of Education and Training of Lesotho implemented a noteworthy teacher career model in 2008 that takes into account a teacher’s qualification as well as her/his performance. Furthermore, as a result of this new career model, the teacher salary is decompressed and seven different grades or salary categories were introduced, ranging from teacher assistant (lowest rank) to senior specialist teacher (highest rank):

- Teacher assistant
- Associate teacher
- Teacher
- Senior teacher
- Assistant specialist teacher
- Specialist teacher
- Senior specialist teacher

In Malawi, there are six grades or categories for teachers and head teachers, ranging from teacher trainees (grade M) to primary head teachers (P8). In addition to not being performance based, there are two problems associated with the current ranking: the same career system applies for teachers as well as education managers thereby encouraging the best teachers to get promoted to managerial services. The brain drain of effective teachers is not the only problem. The bigger problem is that 92.2 percent of all teachers are in the two lowest categories for trained teachers: 71.2 percent of all trained teachers are in grade PT4 (TL) and 20.0 percent in grade PT 3 (TK). Especially, the big mass of teachers, PT4 teachers, have a very small chance of getting promoted into the higher grade, regardless of their performance and their years in service.

Table 10: Vacancy Analysis for Basic Education (January 11, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Establishments</th>
<th>Filled Positions</th>
<th>Vacancies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Head Teacher</td>
<td>TH/ P8</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>T1/ PT1</td>
<td>2,944</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>T1/ PT2</td>
<td>8,598</td>
<td>4,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>TK/ PT3</td>
<td>12,792</td>
<td>9,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>TL/ PT4</td>
<td>30,350</td>
<td>28,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Established</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Teacher</td>
<td>TL/ PT4</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School Teacher (Trainee)</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>4,287</td>
<td>3,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>61,039</strong></td>
<td><strong>48,276</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Human Resource Management.

The fact that there were in January 2010 3,110 vacancies or unfilled posts in in grade PT 3 (TK) or 4,323 vacancies in PT 2 (TJ), for example, does not necessarily imply that the budget is made available to actually fill these vacancies by means of promotion. A comparison between the figures presented by the Directorate of Human Resource Management with those of the Budget Unit within the Department of Planning is necessary to make an assessment of how many of the funded posts have in fact remained vacant.
compiles periodically estimates of expenditures on the recurrent and capital budget that lists for each salary grade:

- Authorized establishment
- Filled posts
- Approved provision for the filled posts
- Number of posts estimated for the next reporting period
- Planned recruitment
- Cost of estimated post for the next reporting period

In the research literature on teacher work conditions, a distinction is made between measures that help to attract teacher education graduates into the profession and policy measures that contribute to the retention but also motivation of qualified teachers. The current salary structure is attractive for newly qualified teachers as well as junior teachers; the salary of regular primary teachers (PT4) is 5.5 times the average GDP per capita. But the teacher salary is not attractive for qualified teachers with substantial teaching experience. In fact, it encourages experienced teachers to quit the teaching profession after five years of experience when the overwhelming majority of them reach the salary ceiling. Those that remain for fifteen years or more, until they fulfill the retirement requirement, are likely to be unmotivated and low on morale as manifested in teacher absenteeism, little time on task, and other related problems.
5. Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations on how to improve the efficiency with regard to the recruitment, utilization, and retention of teachers have been embedded in the larger context and therefore dispersed throughout this report. In order to enable a policy dialogue and reflection, they are presented in the following as a list.

1. **Need for expanding educational statistics/indicators to include:**
   - Age of teachers
   - College-work transition rate (TTCs)
   - Attrition rate of newly qualified teachers (first 5 years of work)
   - Specialized teachers (e.g., multi grade, special needs etc)
   - Expected number of teachers to retire over the next (2-5 year) period

2. **Improve quality of pre-service teacher education:**
   - Make the 2nd year (practicum year) of IPTE pedagogically meaningful
   - Structure the individual tutoring/mentoring sessions in the IPTE program
   - Do not reduce the ODL program to a series of modules but instead develop a coherent and comprehensive ODL program that includes modules, material for face-to-face sessions, and mentoring at the workplace

3. **Expand the non-residential programs at TTCs:**
   - Commission a study to analyze the reasons for the low acceptance rate
   - Provide incentives for applicants to enroll in the non-residential track
   - Determine that at least one of the newly established TTCs is built in a central local with a large non-residential program
   - Explore the use of technology in ODL programs

4. **Revise the status and salary structure of teachers:**
   - Decompress the teacher career ladder by creating more PT3 establishments
   - Separate the career ladders for teachers and education managers
   - Introduce an element of performance evaluation in the promotion review

5. **Pay much greater attention to the utilization of teachers:**
   - Suspend “team-teaching” of qualified teachers
   - Regulate multi-grade teaching and double-shift teaching and pass a policy that enforces the additional compensation of teachers (25%-50% of additional monthly salary); enlist the support of the Teachers Union of Malawi for the development of the policy
   - Provide in-service training courses on multi-grade teaching
   - Put in place a carefully planned in-service programme (CPD) for all teachers which will add up to teachers’ career growth.
References


Department of Educational Planning, EMIS Section [EMIS]. (2010).


