Complementary Basic Education in Malawi

Baseline Survey

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGLIT	Adolescent Girls Literacy programme
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CDO	Community Development Officer
CERT	Centre for Educational Research and Training
CHH	Child –headed Households
DEC	District Executive Committee
DEM	District Education Manager
DPD	District Planning and Development Officer
FPE	Free Primary Education
GVH	Group Village Head
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunovirus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LCMC	Learning Centre Management Committee
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NALP	National Adult Literacy Programme
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSO	National Statistical Office
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PCR	Primary Completion Rates
PEA	Primary Education Advisors
SMC	School Management Committee
TA	Traditional Authority
VDC	Village Development Committee

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introducing Complementary Basic Education (CBE).

Following the introduction of free primary education (FPE) in Malawi in 1994, net enrolment rates increased by approximately 60 percent and since have stabilised at a figure around between 85 to 100 percent. However, despite these enrolment gains, the primary education system is unable to retain 50 percent of those enrol beyond Standard 5 and fewer girls than boys complete school[1]. Current Primary Completion Rates[2] - a measure of progress towards MDG and EFA goals - are not adequate to reach the international target of 100 percent PCR by 2015[3].

Whilst addressing supply-side issues of both the quantity and quality of educational provision is critical in improving educational indicators, it is recognised that various socio-cultural and economic factors mitigate against initiatives to encourage children to remain in, and complete, primary schooling. Opportunity costs of schooling remain high for many households in Malawi and, disproportionately, it is still the poorer and more vulnerable sections of society that are out of school and are most likely to leave school prematurely[4]. Non-formal education offers a more accessible, relevant and flexible form of schooling that can support learning activities in a manner that recognises the needs of children not easily accommodated by the current, formal system.

Malawi education plans[5] recognise the need for a non-formal system for basic education to cater for the high numbers of children of school-going age who have dropped out of formal primary schooling - most of whom had not yet attained basic literacy and numeracy skills - as well those who have never attended school. In September 2004, during negotiations between the Malawi and German governments to refine their joint strategy in basic education, it was agreed that German development co-operation, through the GTZ Basic Education Programme, would support the development of non-formal education for out-of-school children and youth. At a stakeholder consultative meeting in February 2005, a draft programme framework for non-formal basic education was developed[6] and it was agreed to run a three-year pilot that would help to conceptualise the system. It was also agrees that non-formal educational provision for out-of-school children and youth should ensure some measure of equivalence with the formal primary school curriculum and provide the option for those children and youth that have undertaken non-formal courses to return to the formal system.

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1 Calculated from national Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data, Ministry of Education, various years.

2 The primary school completion rate (PCR) is defined as the total number of students successfully completing the last year of primary school in a given year by the total number of children of official graduating age and is a flow measure of the annual output of the primary education system (Bruns et al 2003).

3 World Bank (2004) *Cost, Financing and School Effectiveness of Education in Malawi*, Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series

4 World Bank (2004) *Country Strategic Plan*, p3.

5 See *Costed Education Sector Plan, Primary Education Sub-sector*: Draft working document January 30, 2004 and draft Education for All plan July 2004

6 See Ministry of Education: *Proceedings of a Stakeholder Consultative Meeting on Non-formal Basic Education for Out-of-School Children and Youth,* Ministry of Education, 15-17 February 2005.

The purpose of Complementary Basic Education (CBE) is for out-of-school children and youth to acquire the essential knowledge, skills and values to promote self-reliance, encourage life long learning and enable them to participate fully in society and its development. CBE will target those children and youth who have dropped out before completing standard 5 and successful completion of the three-year course can lead to re-entry if desired into standard 6.

Following a district selection process and initial needs assessment, piloting of Complementary Basic Education (CBE) is underway. This has involved the establishment of 15 learning centres across three target districts - Ntchisi, Chikwawa and Lilongwe – through various supportive strategies: the development of a relevant, needs-based curriculum, selection and training of community facilitators and supervisors and the mobilization of support from local government and communities. CBE is designed to be a relatively cost-effective, inclusive alternative to the provision of basic education, characterized by smaller class sizes, location of centres close to the homes of learners, local recruitment of para-professionals as teachers, flexible timing of classes to suit learners' needs, child-friendly, participatory teaching methods, the use of locally available resources and community management of learning centres.

1.2. CBE Research Programme

In developing CBE, this pilot phase has adopted an action research strategy that will focus on ongoing monitoring and evaluation of pilot implementation. This will be achieved through a collaborative partnership between the Basic Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education - supported by the GTZ Basic Education Programme – the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT), implementing agencies (Adolescent Girls Literacy Project and World Relief) and local government services. Research activities are an embedded, reflective part of the pilot, providing continuous feedback for ongoing adjustment and improvement over the three-year pilot phase.

The main objectives of this research programme are:

- Establishment of a baseline for the CBE pilot.
- Provision of regular feedback to programme stakeholders so as to facilitate evidence-based decision-making on programme procedures, concepts and implementation.
- Evaluating the pilot with a view to helping conceptualise its roll-out on a national scale.

The research programme for the CBE pilot was designed to take place in a series of phases, each with distinct outputs that will inform the pilot's development, delivery and direction. CERT has already facilitated the completion of phases 1 and 2: an initial needs analysis and the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework for the pilot. Phase 3, a comprehensive baseline survey to gather benchmark data for monitoring and evaluation purposes and to record the processes involved in the establishment of the learning centres was conducted in September 2006. The findings of this survey are presented in this report.

1.3. Report Structure

This report presents the findings of two-interrelated activities: the collection of benchmark data for evaluating the outcomes and impact of the CBE pilot and reporting of various aspects of the establishment of the CBE learning centres. These two activities were, for logistical reasons, carried out concurrently and, although the structure of this report attempts to separate out these findings, some overlap is, perhaps, inevitable.

Section 1 offers a brief introduction to the concept of Complementary Basic Education and its action research programme, followed by a more detailed description of the research methodology used during the baseline survey. Section 2 provides a comprehensive profile of learners enrolled with CBE, including both personal and home characteristics and their experiences of learning and livelihoods. Sections 3 through to 5, present further selected benchmark data, including, current literacy and numeracy skills of learners enrolled with CBE, teaching and learning practices in CBE learning centres and the educational status of children in the CBE catchment areas. Section 6 describes stakeholders' perspectives of the processes involved in the establishment of the learning centres and also provides an overview of resources in place at the onset of the pilot. Section 7 highlights stakeholders' expectations of CBE and Chapter 8 concludes the report with a summary of observations *vis-à-vis* expected outputs and outcomes.

1.4. Methodology

1.4.1. Study Design

The baseline survey was designed to gather benchmark data for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of CBE activities and to evaluate processes involved in the establishment of the learning centres, including information on learning centres and their management, the learners, the community facilitators and the surrounding community. The main focus of this exercise was survey of enrolled learners, which gathered demographic data on learners and tested their current levels of literacy and numeracy. In addition, a mini-household survey of the catchment areas of learning centres was conducted in order to estimate numbers of children receiving schooling, either formal or non-formal, as well as those out-of-school. As well providing context, such data will also be used to assess the impact of the CBE pilot on the educational status of children in the locale. Interviews with key informants and observation of classes also gave insight into the establishment and operation of learning centres

1.4.2. Sampling

All five learning centres in the three target districts were visited, giving a total of 15 learning centres. As much as possible, at each learning centre all enrolled learners were targeted: an expected number of approximately 40 learners per centre, giving a potential maximum sample size of 600 learners. Due to logistical constraints, where numbers of enrolled learners were more than 40, random sampling was used come up with a sample of 40 learners. This procedure was followed in three centres in Chikwawa, where enrolment was closer to sixty, and at one learning centre in Ntchisi. Learners were expected to be out-of-school children between the ages of 9 and 17 years, although a few enrolled learners were subsequently found to be either older or younger than the given age range (see Section 2.1).

Purposive sampling was used to identify key informants at both community and district level. These included village heads and Learning Centre Management Committee (LCMC) members at the community level and CBE supervisors and Primary Education Advisors at the district level.

Enrolment lists of learners were provided by CBE supervisors, in consultation with LCMC members and facilitators. LCMC members and supervisors were also instrumental in mobilising learners to attend the baseline survey activities.

To conduct the mini-household survey, a random sample of approximately 100 households within the given catchment area of each learning centre was taken. This involved collaboration with local community members and transect walks to first identify the boundaries of the catchment area - this often involved several villages within a relatively close radius. Then systematic random sampling was used to select households. One key informant in each household was asked to supply information on the educational status of all 9-17 year old children in the household who had not completed primary education beyond Standard 5.

1.4.3. Survey Instruments

The following instruments were used to gather data:

- A structured learner questionnaire, including oral and written test items to assess the learners' numeracy and literacy levels on enrolment with the learning centres and attitude statements assess their attitudes relating to key curriculum areas. Additional questions gathered demographic information about learners, their experiences of learning and livelihoods and their expectations of CBE. Questionnaires were administered on a one-to-one basis by research assistants trained to work with young people.

- A household survey checklist designed to list the numbers of children (9-17 yrs) per household that were enrolled in either formal or non-formal education, or were out-of-school.

- A Learner Centre checklist was used to collect quantitative data pertaining to the learning centres, including enrolments, resources available, teacher characteristics etc. Such data will provide the basis of ongoing monitoring and progress reports.

- A structured class observation schedule designed to assess teaching and learning activities based on key indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

- Semi-structured key informant interview schedules for community members involved in the management of the learning centres, supervisors and facilitators, as well as district officers. Interviews will gather information on the processes involved in the establishment of learning centres, as well as stakeholders' expectations of CBE.

1.4.4. Test Design

Test items to assess learners' literacy (in Chichewa and English) and numeracy skills were developed based on selected standardised test items from established achievement studies (i.e. PCAR baseline survey and achievement studies conducted by MIE). This allows for the assessment of learners' knowledge and skills equivalent to tests previously administered to pupils in the formal primary system. The test items were organised into five sections: Pre-literacy, Pre-numeracy, Chichewa, English and Numeracy. (see Table 1.1.) Chichewa, English and Numeracy sections all had three levels: level 1 equivalent to Standard 1, Level 2 equivalent to Standard 3 and Level 3 equivalent to Standard 5. Test items were graded according to level of difficulty and administered in sequence starting with the easiest. Each level had three questions – if any learner failed to answer three questions correctly in one level, then they were not asked to proceed to the next level, the assumption being that they had not achieved competency at that level.

Table 1: List of test items for CBE Learner Questionnaire

Content Area	Level/ Test items	Equivalent to
Pre-literacy	• Holding book correctly • Open book at correct page • Show direction in which words are read.	-
Pre-numeracy	• Count ten fingers • Identify the number 9. • State value of given coins	-
Literacy (Chichewa)	Level 1 • Copy simple phrase in Chichewa • Read back phrase • Write name	Standard 1
	Level 2 • Show correct spelling of given word • Show plural of given word • Underline correct word to complete sentence.	Standard 3
	Level 3 • Read and identify opposite of written word. • Read and complete proverb • Read short text and write answer to question (comprehension)	Standard 5
Literacy (English)	Level 1 • Copy simple phrase in English • Read back phrase • Write any known English word	Standard 1
	Level 2 • Point to word describing occupation of person in given picture. • Show correct word for given phrase (showing possessive) • Show correct word for given phrase (showing change of tense)	Standard 3

Content Area	Level/ Test items	Equivalent to
	Level 3 • Read and complete riddle • Write short phrase to describe action in given picture. • Read sentences and arrange in correct order.	Standard 5
Numeracy	Level 1 • Write the number 17. • Add 3 + 2 • Subtract 8 -2	Standard 1
	Level 2 • Complete number line • Multiplication problem • Divide 12 by 4.	Standard 3
	Level 3 • Read time shown on clockface • Measurements: how many kg in 3000g. • Addition with 3-figure numbers.	Standard 5

1.4.5. Study Logistics

The Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT), University of Malawi coordinated the baseline survey exercise, with financial and logistical support from GTZ and Eco-Education. The lead researchers were Catherine Moleni and Dorothy Nampota. Demis Kunje, also of CERT, assisted in training activities and co-ordinated fieldwork in Ntchisi. The survey activities took place over two weeks in September 2006, with interviews with enrolled learners taking place prior to the opening of the learning centres.

A team of 12 full-time research assistants and 3 part-time research assistants (to take part in learner questionnaire administration only) with experience in educational surveys were recruited and trained in the background and concept of CBE and the proposed baseline survey activities at a four-day workshop held in Zomba. The training also included how to administer questionnaires and test items to children and youth, the translation of key informant interview schedules into Chichewa and the discussion of sampling techniques and other logistics of the household survey. The questionnaires for learners - including the test items - were piloted on primary school children from Standards 1, 3 and 5 at two primary schools in Zomba.

Unfortunately, supervisors and government extension officers were not available for inclusion as research assistants of the research team - as was successfully done during the earlier CBE Needs Assessment exercise - since they were otherwise committed during the time allocated for the baseline training workshop and the first week of field visits, participating, instead, in facilitator orientation. To some extent, this compromised the action research ethos of the CBE pilot, although efforts were made to include both supervisors and PEAs during subsequent visits to learning centres in the second week, allowing them to observe, and assist in, the conducting of baseline activities.

Three teams of 5 research assistants, under a principal researcher, were assigned to one of the 3

target districts. A research supervisor was appointed from amongst the research assistants for each team, dependent on their experience and competencies shown during training. Each team spent one week at their respective districts prior to the opening of the learning centres to meet village heads, map out catchment areas, meet enrolled learners and administer the learner survey questionnaire. Staff from AGLIT and World Relief offices and, on occasion, government extension officers joined teams to help in negotiating access to communities and sensitise community members on the research activities. The second week involved visits to the newly-opened learning centres to carry out additional activities (class observations and completion of the Learning Centre checklist) and conduct the mini- household survey. Class observations were carried out by the principal researchers, whilst the research supervisor was responsible for the checklists.

1.4.6. Study Limitations

One constraint in the conduct of the baseline survey was, because of the complexities of the enrolment process, an initial lack of reliable enrolment lists of learners and confusion over who was responsible for making the lists available to the research teams. In addition, in some areas the enrolment process had not been completed by the time the baseline survey had commenced, as additional learners were continuing to enrol, and despite sensitisation of communities by both the CBE supervisors and the research teams, some community members believed that attempts to call enrolled learners for administration of questionnaires was part of the recruitment process for additional learners. Also, in a few communities, some community members thought that household survey exercise was also a drive to enrol learners. With the help of LCMC members and CBE supervisors, however, such initial confusion was eventually minimised.

Unfortunately, a shifting in the opening date of the learner centres, combined with the restricted availability of the researchers, meant that the learning centres were being visited in the first week of opening rather than the second week as originally planned. This inevitably put additional strain on some facilitators and created extra work for the CBE supervisors during an already difficult period. However, despite the presence of the research teams, the learners did not appear too distracted as to jeopardise class observations, and in most cases teaching and learning commenced relatively unhindered

Of a theoretical maximum of 600 learners, 452 were interviewed. Comparing this sample with the enrolment lists provided, the baseline survey managed to reach 77% of all learners: 75.1% of girls and 78.9% of boys. This allows a high degree of confidence in the ability to generalise findings from the sample to all enrolled learners. However, according to enrolment lists, in Chikwawa, older learners and girls appear to have been under-represented in the sample: only 66.9% of enrolled girls were interviewed and only 58.4% of older learners (14-17 years). This may have been due to the nature of the sampling exercise, or the availability of the learners, but is likely to be also a reflection of misreporting of ages. Older boys, for example, appear under-represented (58.6%), but yet younger boys appear over-sampled (92.8%), suggesting that during interviews some boys gave ages younger than those recorded on enrolments lists. Similarly, in Lilongwe, amongst the girls who were interviewed, a greater number gave their age as below 13 than were actually recorded on enrolment lists. This suggests that, in some cases, ages recorded during enrolment exercises may have been given as older than those given during face-to-face interviews. Whilst girls in Chikwawa slightly under-represented in the sample, this should not raise serious concerns since girls represent the majority of learners in Chikwawa and, as such, there are still adequate numbers

within the sample (101 girls compared to 55 boys) to ensure that responses are not significantly skewed according to gender.

In terms of orphanhood, a disparity between the enrolment lists provided and information from interviews suggests that during enrolment several children were being recorded as orphans[7] who, according to themselves, were not; if one assumes greater accuracy from face-to-face reporting. This over-recording of orphanhood seemed more prominent in Chikwawa, in one Learning Centre in particular. Whether this was a deliberate action, based on an assumption that conferring orphanhood status might bring additional benefits, or simply poor recording of information, is not clear. In addition, a lack of reliable data on numbers of orphans in the nearby primary schools visited, meant that meaningful comparisons between CBE and the formal system, in terms of numbers of orphans enrolled, could not be made within the catchment areas for the CBE centres.

In terms of the assessment of learners' attitudes to issues related to core curriculum areas, this was limited to the measurement of a few simple attitude statements, which, although carefully piloted and adapted, can only be merely indicative of attitudes to what are quite complex issues.

1.4.7. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from learner questionnaires, Learner Centre checklists and class observation schedules were entered using SPSS software and simple descriptive statistics were run. Data from the household survey was entered on excel and percentages of in and out-of-school calculated. Where appropriate, data was disaggregated by gender and district and, where relevant, by age group. Qualitative data from key informant interviews was analysed using matrices based on the interview protocol and major themes were identified, categorised and, where appropriate, tallied.

[7] Recording of orphans during enrolment exercises were generally in consultation with LCMC members and chiefs, with less direct consultation with children

2. PROFILE OF LEARNERS

2.1. Learners' characteristics.

2.1.1. Gender and age.

Of the 452 learners that took part in the survey, 41% were female and 59% were male (see Table 2.1). This closely reflects the enrolment lists provided, which show that, overall, 43% of enrolled learners were female and 57% were male (See Section 6.5 for enrolment figures).

Table 2.1 shows some variation across the three districts. In Chikwawa, almost two-thirds of the learners interviewed were female (64%), compared to Lilongwe and Ntchisi where the majority of learners were male (77% and 64%, respectively). Again these proportions closely reflect the trends in actual enrolment figures (See Section 6.5 for enrolment figures), showing that the sample of learners interviewed is representative of all enrolled learners according to gender.

Table 2.1: Distribution of learners by district and gender

District	Female		Male		Total	
	no	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*
Chikwawa	101	65	55	35	156	100
Lilongwe	34	23	116	77	150	100
Ntchisi	52	36	94	64	146	100
All Centres	**187**	**41**	**265**	**59**	**452**	**100**

As % of total learners

The mean age of learners that took part in the survey, was 14 years, with ages ranging from 7 years to 21 years. Those learners who were below 9 years of age made up just 1% of the total sample; those learners over 17 years of age, 2%. Four out of the five enrolled learners that gave their age as below 9 were from Chikwawa district and four of the seven that were over-age were 4 boys from Lilongwe district. Interestingly, none of the ages recorded on lists of enrolled learners indicated over or under-age learners, suggesting, perhaps, that the learners were more likely to give their real age during interviews.

Table 2.2: number and percentage* of learners according to age category, by district and gender (n= 186 female, 264 male, 450 total)

District	Younger learners (13 years or below)						Older learners (14 year and above)					
	female		male		total		female		male		total	
	no	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*
Chikwawa	58	60	38	40	96	100	42	71	17	29	59	100
Lilongwe	17	28	43	72	60	100	17	19	73	81	90	100
Ntchisi	19	49	20	51	39	100	33	31	73	69	106	100
All Centres	**94**	**48**	**101**	**51.8**	**195**	**100**	**92**	**36**	**163**	**64**	**255**	**100**

As % of total learners in same age category

Overall, although approximately equal numbers of boys and girls under 13 years took part in the survey, amongst the older age group, a greater number of the learners were boys (64%, compared to 36% of girls). However, whilst these trends reflect details provide on enrolment lists, the actual figures presented should be treated with a degree of caution given the disparity, in some cases, between ages recorded during enrolment and those given during interviews (see Methodology, Section 1.4.6) Across the districts the pattern varies. In Chikwawa, where only a third of the learners were male, the majority of both younger and older learners were girls (60% and 71%, respectively), with more of the boys belonging to the younger age group. This latter observation, however, reflects, to some extent, an over-sampling of boys of ages less than 13 compared to those who gave their age as 14 or over. In Lilongwe, where only a small minority of learners were female (approx. 20%), boys dominated both age groups. In Ntchisi, there were approximately equal numbers of boys and girls in the younger age group, but the majority of older learners were male (69%). With regard to these gender disparities across the districts, a possible explanation for a greater proportion of girls enrolling in Chikwawa might be linked to the positive influence of AGLIT - who have worked in close proximity to the target areas for several years - in promoting girls' participation in non-formal education opportunities.

The great majority of learners (97%) interviewed were within the expected age range of 9 -17 years, with a mean age of 14 years. Districts in Central Region, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, present a profile of learners who are predominantly older (60% and 73%, respectively) and of whom the majority are male (77% and 64%, respectively). In Chikwawa, the majority of learners (65%) are female and there are a greater number of young learners (62%).

2.1.2. Orphanhood

In the Malawian context, children are regarded as orphans if they have lost either one or both parents[8]. To estimate how many of the learners were orphans, they were first asked whether both of their biological parents were still living. Table 2.3 shows the number of learners who gave a negative response to this question and indicated that just under a third of the learners that were interviewed (30%) had lost one or both parents[9]. Overall, a slightly greater proportion of boys compared to girls were orphans (33% and 23%, respectively) and this is most pronounced in Ntchisi district.

Table 2.3: Number and percentage* of learners with one or both parents no longer alive, by district and gender.(n= 187 female, 265 male, 452 total).

District	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	27	27	20	36	47	30
Lilongwe	9	27	32	28	41	27
Ntchisi	11	21	36	38	47	32
All districts	**47**	**25**	**88**	**33**	**135**	**30**

* As % of girls, boys, all learners.

[8]Those who had lost both parents are termed double orphans, those who lost one parent, single orphans.
[9]Only one learner stated that they did not know and this was considered negligible.

According to the 2004 MDHS national data, approximately 22% of children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents; 4% had lost both parents[10], with little variation by region. The greater percentage of orphans amongst learners interviewed perhaps reflects a situation where a greater proportion of orphans was found amongst children eligible to enrol for CBE (i.e. out of school) *and had enrolled*. This would underline findings of the earlier CBE Needs Assessment exercise, which, using observations and social mapping tools, showed that in several villages a greater percentage of orphans were found amongst out-of-school children compared to school-going children[11]. These figures indicate that CBE is reaching out to orphans, particularly when compared with district-wide figures for the formal system, which show that in Chikwawa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi the percentage of single orphans enrolled in primary schools in 2005 was only 10%, 7% and 7%, respectively. The percentage of double orphans enrolled in primary schools in Chikwawa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi in 2005 was 5%, 3% and 3%, respectively[12].

Table 2.4: Number and percentage of learners with both parents no longer alive (double orphans), by district and gender (n= 187 female, 265 male, 452 total).

District	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	8	8	2	4	10	6
Lilongwe	0	0	3	3	3	2
Ntchisi	3	6	6	6	9	6
All districts	**11**	**6**	**11**	**4**	**22**	**5**

Table 2.4 shows that, overall, 5% of learners interviewed had lost both their parents, with only a slight difference between boys and girls (4% and 6% respectively), which is unlikely to be significant. Across the districts, Lilongwe shows the least number of double orphans (2%), amongst the learners interviewed. Although the number of children concerned is very small, where percentages of double orphans fall below national figures (see above), such as in Lilongwe, this should perhaps indicate the need for further investigation to establish whether this potentially vulnerable group is finding it difficult to access CBE.

Approximately a third (30%) of those who were eligible for the CBE pilot and had enrolled, were orphans, showing that the CBE is actively attracting orphans to its programme. A significantly greater proportion of CBE learners are orphans compared to pupils in the formal primary system.

2.1.3. Marital status and parenthood.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the vast majority of learners were not married, nor have been married (93%), although a small minority of female learners (10%) and a few male learners (2%) said that they were currently married (See Table 2.5). Most married learners were found in Chikwawa

[10] National Statistical Office (NSO), and ORC Macro (2005) *Malawi Demographic Health survey 2004,* Calverton, Maryland, NSO & ORC Macro, pp.11.
[11] Moleni,C.M., D. Nampota, E.C. Kadzamira (2005) *Complementary Basic Education in Malawi: a Needs Analysis*, MoE/CERT, Zomba.
[12] Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) data for 2005.

district, of which the greater proportion was female (19% of girls compared to 2% of boys). Of those that said they were currently married almost all were 14 years or older, apart from 3 learners in Chikwawa who gave their age as 13 years or younger. Since, according to recent MDHS figures[13], there is little significant difference between the age of first marriage for women in Southern and Central Region, it is unclear why more married learners had enrolled in Chikwawa, unless this reflects the positive influence of AGLIT in promoting the attendance of teenage mothers at literacy classes.

Table 2.5: Marital status of learners, by district and gender (n= 187 female, 264 male, 451 total).

District/ marital status	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	no.	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*
Chikwawa						
Never married	79	78	54	98	133	85
Currently married	19	19	1	2	20	13
Divorced/widowed	3	3	0	0	3	2
Lilongwe						
Never married	33	97	111	96	144	96
Currently married	0	0	4	3	4	3
Divorced/widowed	1	3	5	1	2	1
Ntchisi						
Never married	52	100	90	97	142	98
Currently married	0	0	1	1	1	1
Divorced/widowed	0	0	2	2	2	1
All districts						
Never married	164	88	255	97	419	93
Currently married	19	10	6	2	25	5
Divorced/widowed	4	2	3	1	7	2

According to the 2004 MDHS survey, approximately a third of all 15-19 year-old women are married or living together (NSO, 2005). Although this age group is not necessarily equivalent to the target group for CBE, this does suggest that married teenage girls are under-represented amongst CBE learners (none of the female learners in Ntchisi and Lilongwe were married). This suggests that more specific efforts may need to be made to encourage married females to participate in CBE. The small number of married boys enrolled for CBE (2%) reflects the national estimate for male 15-19 year-olds married or living together (ibid).

[13] NSO (2005) The 2004 Malawi Demographic Health Survey, pp98.

Table 2.6 shows that, overall, 6% of learners interviewed said they had children, with most of these being female (12% of girls compared to 2% of boys). The greatest number of these teenage parents was found in Chikwawa (20%), corresponding with the small group of girls who are currently, or have been, married.

Table 2.6: Number and percentage of learners who have biological children, by district and gender (n= 187 female, 265 male, 452 total)

District	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	20	20	0	0	20	13
Lilongwe	0	0	4	3	4	3
Ntchisi	3	6	2	2	5	3
All districts	**23**	**12**	**6**	**2**	**29**	**6**

A few married teenagers (6%) have enrolled with CBE, the majority of whom (76%) are girls from Chikwawa, who also have children. The small numbers of married learners in Lilongwe and Ntchisi are boys.

2.2. Learners' Household Characteristics

2.2.1. Household composition

The majority of learners interviewed (74%) said they currently stay with one or both of their parents, in their parents' home (see Table 2.7). Of the remainder, several live with their grandparent(s) (14%), or other relatives (6%). A greater number of female learners live in their own home with a spouse and/or children (11%) compared to male learners (2%). This corresponds to female married learners, all whom were residing in Chikwawa district (see above). Apart from this, there is little variation amongst learners' living arrangements across the three districts.

Table 2.7: Percentage of learners showing living arrangements, by gender. (n= 187 girls, 265 boys, 452 total).

Where learners currently live	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
In parents' home	74	74	74
In grandparents' home	11	15	14
With other relatives	3	8	6
In own house with spouse/family	11	2	6
Child-headed household	2	0	1

A significantly greater proportion of single orphans - approximately a third - were living with their grandparents compared to learners overall (29% against 14%). Most single orphans (51%), however, were living with the surviving parent. Of the 22 double orphans that took part in the survey, just under half said (46%) they live with their grandparents and a third (32%) with other relatives. The remainder are either married or living on their own, with other children or youth. The

few learners that live in such child-headed households (1%, see Table 2.7), all are double orphans.

2.2.2. Household characteristics

A series of questions – based on indicators for social-economic status – were asked regarding the housing environment and possession of various household goods and resources in households where learners reside. These give a sense of learners' home background and level of poverty therein.

Table 2.8: Percentage of learners, showing type of housing, by district.

Main flooring and roofing materials	Chikwawa (%)	Lilongwe (%)	Ntchisi (%)	All districts (%)
Natural floor (earth)	94	98	96	96
Finished floor (cement etc.)	7	2	4	4
Grass thatch roof	76	93	88	86
Iron sheet roof	23	7	11	14
Cardboard/Plastic/canvas	0.6	0	0.6	0.4
n =	*154*	*150*	*146*	*450*

Only 0.2% of learners' households had electricity, lower than the national figure for rural areas (2%), suggestive of lower socio-economic status. Table 2.8 shows almost all learners (96%) stay in homes with floors made of earth or other natural materials. This reflects the extensive use of earth floors in rural areas in Malawi generally (nationally, 87%) and indicates low socio-economic status and 'potential exposure to disease-causing agents' (NSO, 2005). Similarly, the vast majority of learners (86%) live in homes thatched with grass, although in Chikwawa almost of quarter of learners' homes (23%) had roofs made from iron-sheets.

Table 2.9: Percentage of learners, showing their main source of drinking water, by district.

Main source of drinking water	Chikwawa (%)	Lilongwe (%)	Ntchisi (%)	All districts (%)
Piped water into dwelling	0	0	0	0
Piped water into yard/plot	0.6	0	0	0.2
Community standpipe	0.6	2	0	1
Borehole	99	15	53	56
Protected well	0	9	5	4
Unprotected well	0	74	34	36
Surface water (river, dam etc.)	0	0.7	8	3
n =	*154*	*150*	*146*	*450*

The source of households' drinking water has important implications for learners' workloads, as well as their own health, and the health of others in their household. Piped water, water from protected wells and from deep boreholes is expected to be relatively free from disease. Table 2.9 shows that almost none of the learners have access to piped water and the main source of drinking water for the majority of learners is the borehole (56%), although there is significant variation between districts. In Chikwawa, almost all learners (99%) get their drinking water from boreholes and, by implication, have a relatively clean water supply. In Lilongwe, by contrast, the vast majority of learners' drinking water comes from unprotected wells (74%) and in Ntchisi a small minority of

learners (8%) draw their water from rivers or streams.

Table 2.10 : Percentage of learners who reside in households with various sanitation facilities

Toilet facilities	Chikwawa (%)	Lilongwe (%)	Ntchisi (%)	All districts (%)
Flush toilet	0	0	0.7	0.2
Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine	0	0.7	0	0.2
Improved Latrine (cement floor/iron sheets)	0.6	0.7	2	1
Traditional pit latrine (mud/thatch)	49	96	95	80
None	51	3	0.7	18
n =	*154*	*150*	*146*	*450*

Traditional pit latrines are still the most common form of sanitation facility in Malawi, used by 80% of households in rural areas (NSO, 2005). Table 2.10 shows a similar picture, although this is somewhat skewed across the districts. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi, almost all learners' households have traditional pit latrines (96% and 95%, respectively), whilst half of all learners' households in Chikwawa (51%) have no sanitation facilities at all. Given that other housing characteristics in Chikwawa reflect a slightly higher socio-economic status compared to the other districts (see above), this is likely to reflect socio-cultural practices rather than poverty levels *per se*.

Table 2.11 : Percentage of learners' who reside in households with selected items

Household items	Chikwawa (%)	Lilongwe (%)	Ntchisi (%)	All districts (%)
Paraffin lamp	88	75	75	80
Bicycle	51	46	42	47
Motorcycle	1	4	1	2
Car	0	1.3	2.1	1.1
Radio/Cassette player/CD	55	65	73	64
Television	0	0.7	0.7	0.4
n =	*156*	*150*	*146*	*452*

Learners were also asked about their households' ownership of certain durable items, thus providing an indicator of economic status, as well as a measure of access to transport, mass media and opportunities for reading, for example. Table 2.11 shows that the vast majority of learners' households owned a paraffin lamp (80%), which, interestingly, is significantly higher than the national average (just 36% of rural households) (ibid). Possession of a bicycle or motorised transport does reflect, however, the national picture, as does the possession of a radio: just under half of all learners' households have a bicycle (47%), whilst two-thirds (64%) own a radio, although ownership of a radio is significantly lower in Chikwawa.

Table 2.12.: Percentage of learners' who reside in households with reading materials

Reading materials	Chikwawa (%)	Lilongwe (%)	Ntchisi (%)	All districts (%)
Bible/Quoran	37	43	42	40
Other books	26	27	31	28
Newspapers/magazines/pamphlets	27	21	28	25
n =	*156*	*150*	*146*	*452*

In terms of learners' access to reading materials and opportunities to practice developing literacy skills, four out of ten households owned a bible or the Quoran (40%), although fewer learners' households (28%) possessed any other type of book. Only around a quarter of learners' households (25%) had newspapers, magazines or similar types of reading materials.

Learners generally live in homes that reflect low economic status: no electricity, with mud floors and thatch roofs. However several learners in Chikwawa districts stay in houses of a better quality than those in the other districts, and have greater access to clean water. Despite this, sanitation in Chikwawa is poor. Possession of household items generally reflects national trends, with very few households owning motorised transport. Less than a third of learners live in households that possess books other than religious texts.

2.3. Learners' experience of learning and livelihoods

2.3.1. *School attendance*

Overall, 17% of learners interviewed said they had never attended school (see Table 2.13). This appears to correspond with the national trend: of all 10-19 year olds interviewed during the 2004 MDHS, 16% of girls and 17% of boys said they had received *no* formal education (NSO, 2005:pp14&15).

Comparing districts, percentages for non-attendance show some variation according to gender. In Lilongwe, a greater proportion of girls said they had never attended school, compared to boys (21% and 16%, respectively). In Chikwawa there was little difference, with 20% of boys compared to 18% of girls, but in Ntchisi a greater proportion of boys said they had never attended school. : 20% of boys were non-attendees compared to only 10% of the girls. Further investigation is required to examine such exclusion, although this may reflect a negative influence of nyau traditions, which often conflict with formal schooling.

Table 2.13: Percentage of learners who have never attended school, by gender and district
(n= 30 girls, 48 boys, 78 total)

District	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	18	18	11	20	29	19
Lilongwe	7	21	18	16	25	17
Ntchisi	5	10	19	20	24	16
All districts	**30**	**16**	**48**	**18**	**78**	**17**

Although the numbers are relatively small, Table 2.14 shows that, overall, a greater proportion of non-attendees were 13 years or less, although these figures mask variation between districts. In Chikwawa and Lilongwe the majority of non-attendees were below the age of 13 (66% and 68%, respectively), whilst in Ntchisi the majority of learners with no formal schooling (74%) were older.

Table 2.14 Number and percentage of non-attendees by age group and district.

District	Younger (9-13yrs)		Older (14-17 yrs)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	19	66	10	35
Lilongwe	17	68	8	32
Ntchisi	6	26	17	74
All districts	**42**	**54**	**35**	**46**

Learners who said they *had* attended school were asked what standard they were in when they dropped out permanently. In all three districts the majority of learners had dropped out by Standard 3 (76%, 75% and 63% for Chikwawa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, respectively). A smaller proportion had dropped out in Standard 4 and, despite the enrolment guidelines that stipulated that children eligible for CBE were *not* to have reached beyond Standard 4, a few learners said they had dropped out in Standard 5 and 6 and two boys in Ntchisi had reached Standard 7. The trend seen for female learners was slightly skewed, as a greater proportion of girls had dropped out in these higher standards compared to boys.

Table 2.15: Number and percentages of learners in Lilongwe district who dropped out of school, showing standard reached, by gender (n= 27 girls, 98 boys, 125 total)

Standard reached	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Std 1	6	22	19	19	25	20
Std 2	3	11	24	25	27	22
Std 3	10	37	32	33	42	34
Std 4	4	15	19	19	23	18
Std 5	4	15	3	3	7	6
Std 6	0	0	1	1	1	1

Patterns in Lilongwe and Ntchisi seem to suggest that a greater proportion of boys had dropped out at an earlier stage in their schooling compared to girls. Tables 2.15 & 2.16 show that by Standard 2, approximately 40% of male learners in these two districts had dropped out of school compared to approximately 30% of female learners. This pattern did not emerge in Chikwawa, where, in contrast, a slightly greater proportion of girls (58%) said they had dropped out before Standard 2, compared to boys (50%) (see Table 2.17)

Table 2.16: Number and percentages of learners in Ntchisi district who dropped out of

school, showing standard reached, by gender (n= 47 girls, 75 boys, 122 total)

District	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Std 1	5	11	12	16	17	14
Std 2	10	21	19	25	29	24
Std 3	13	28	18	24	31	25
Std 4	10	21	13	17	23	19
Std 5	7	15	8	11	15	12
Std 6	2	4	3	4	5	4
Std 7	0	0	2	3	2	2

Overall, learners in Chikwawa district appear to have had less schooling than their counterparts in the other districts: with over half (55%) having dropped out by Standard 2, compared to 42% and 38% of learners in Lilongwe and Ntchisi respectively (see Table 2.17).

Table 2.17: Number and percentages of learners in Chikwawa district who dropped out of school, showing standard reached, by gender (n= 83 girls, 44 boys, 127 total)

Standard reached	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total (%)	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Std 1	24	29	17	39	41	32
Std 2	24	29	5	11	29	23
Std 3	19	23	8	18	27	21
Std 4	6	7	12	27	18	14
Std 5	8	10	1	2	9	7
Std 6	2	2	1	2	3	2

Just under a fifth of learners enrolled in CBE (17%) had never attended formal school. In Ntchisi non-attendees were predominantly older boys. The majority of enrolled learners who had attended formal school had not reached beyond Standard 3 (76%, 75% and 63% for Chikwawa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, respectively). In Chikwawa, learners had generally not progressed as far in formal schooling compared to the other districts. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi boys were more likely than girls to have dropped out in a lower standard.

2.3.2. Experiences of formal schooling.

In order to gain insight into some of the school-related factors that might have influenced learners' attendance at primary school, all learners were asked what was the main thing they liked and did not like about school. However, whilst, much research has been done on the reasons behind children dropping out of schools, which are often complex and multi-factorial, further opportunities will be used to clarify the reasons and/or events that led up to CBE learners dropping out permanently from the formal system.

Table 2.18 lists the main responses given by learners. This shows that most learners either said

they liked learning how to read and write or mentioned a specific subject. A small minority said they enjoyed playing with friends or making new friends. Whilst there was generally little variation in responses by gender, involvement in sports or drama was more popular with boys, whilst a greater proportion of girls stated that they did not like school.

Table 2.18: List of main things that learners liked about formal school, by gender.

What learners likes about formal schools	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Learning how to read and/or write	55	29	79	36	134	35
Learning different specific subjects (e.g. English, Maths)	42	26	55	25	97	25
Playing with/making friends	24	15	33	15	57	15
Nothing/Did not like school	23	14	19	7	42	11
Sports/Drama	2	1.1	14	6.5	16	4.2
Receiving materials/foodstuffs	5	3	7	3	12	3
Parents buy clothes for school/ Look smart	1	0.6	5	2	6	2

When looking at what it was that learners did not like about school, it is clear that, although approximately a third (35%) could not give a particular dislike, many had been unhappy at the violence experienced or observed during their time at primary school. Table 2.19 shows that almost a quarter of learners – both boys and girls - mentioned corporal or harsh punishments, whilst a significant minority mentioned fighting or teasing by fellow pupils. Apart from punishments and bullying, a small minority also mentioned that they did like going to school when they did not have uniform or appropriate clothes to wear. Both these factors reinforce the importance of CBE policy that does not exclude or discourage children from attending if poorly dressed and does not allow the use of punishments to discipline learners.

Table 2.19: List of main things that learners did *not* like about formal school, by gender.

What learners did *not* like about formal schools	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Nothing/no dislikes	54	35	76	35	130	35
Corporal/harsh punishment	33	21	52	24	85	23
Fighting amongst pupils	23	15	35	16	58	16
No/not enough suitable clothes to wear	9	6	18	8	27	8
Verbal abuse/jeering from classmates	7	4	9	4	16	4
Lack of learning materials	4	3	7	3	11	3
Mopping/sweeping surroundings	5	3	2	0.9	7	2
Male teachers deliberately failing us	2	1	3	1	5	1
Time clashed with household chores	1	0.6	3	1	4	1
Distance was too far	0	0	4	2	4	1
P						

Most learners (61%) generally appreciated the potential learning opportunities available in primary school and said they enjoyed learning. A significant dislike of the formal system raised was the violence experienced: either corporal punishments from teachers or bullying from fellow pupils.

2.3.3. Non-formal learning opportunities

Of the 452 learners, only 15 said they had ever attended any literacy classes outside of formal schooling. Eleven of these were girls, all of who were from Chikwawa and had previously attended AGLIT classes, a NGO-run health and literacy programme. Only 4 boys said they had attended literacy classes and only two of these could identify the course attended: in both cases the government-run National Adult Literacy Programme, which enrols learners from the age of 15.

A small percentage of girls and boys said that they were currently attending vocational training (4% and 5%, respectively). Again, most of these girls were from Chikwawa; and all were receiving training in sewing/tailoring or cookery/baking. Conversely, only 1 boy in Chikwawa said he was receiving training – in metalwork – whilst a few boys in Lilongwe and Ntchisi (4%and 6% respectively) were receiving training in metal work and/or carpentry. Such training being received by boys was generally from local artisans rather than government or NGO training programmes.

Less than 5% of learners had taken part in non-formal education programmes or were currently receiving any form of vocational training.

2.3.4. Income-generating activities

One of the intended outcomes of the CBE curriculum is to develop learners' pre-vocational and business skills in order to improve their livelihoods. To assess this learners interviewed during the baseline were asked if they were currently involved in income-generating activities (IGAs) and, if yes, what type. Their responses also give an indication of working responsibilities that might restrict time available for learning.

Table 2.20: Number and percentage of learners currently involved in IGA, by gender and district. (n= 187 female, 265 male, 452 total)

District	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	No.	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*
Chikwawa	9	9	1	2	10	6
Lilongwe	2	6	28	24	30	20
Ntchisi	10	19	29	31	39	27
All districts	**21**	**11**	**58**	**22**	**79**	**18**

Table 2.20 shows that, currently, around a fifth of boys enrolled with CBE (22%), and a tenth of girls (11%), were involved in IGA. This suggests that, particularly for girls that there are other factors that have kept these learners out of school: domestic chores, for example, which were not considered IGA. Again, this trend varied between districts. In Chikwawa, relatively few learners said they were involved in IGA (6%) and most of these activities were carried out by girls. These

activities involved small-scale vending: selling cooked foodstuffs, vegetables or, in one case, collected firewood. Only one boy in Chikwawa ran an IGA, that being beer-brewing. In Ntchisi and Lilongwe there was much greater involvement of learners in IGA (27% and 20%, respectively) Those involved were predominantly boys: up to approximately a third (31%) of all learners involved in IGA in Ntchisi.

Table 2.21: List of IGA activities being carried out by learners, as percentage of learners reporting involvement, by gender (n=21 girls, 58 boys, 79 total)

Type of IGA	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Growing and selling garden produce (e.g. vegetables)	12	57	16	28	28	35
Casual labour (e.g. ganyu)	3	14	13	22	16	20
Selling livestock/ meat (e.g. goats, chickens)	0	0	11	19	11	14
Selling cooked foodstuffs/snacks (e.g. mandazi)	5	24	4	7	9	11
Selling groceries and other consumables (e.g. paraffin)	0	0	6	10	6	8
Farming tobacco	0	0	3	5	3	4
Selling collected firewood/grass	1	5	1	2	2	3
Weaving	0	0	2	3	2	3
Beer brewing	0	0	1	2	1	1
Begging	0	0	1	2	1	1

Table 2.21 indicates that, with the exception of Chikwawa, not only are boys generally more frequently involved in IGA, but that this included a wider range of activities compared to girls. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi, whilst girls were generally limited to growing and selling garden produce and selling cooked foodstuffs, boys would also earn money through the rearing and selling of livestock (goats, chickens etc.), selling groceries and other consumables (e.g. paraffin) and farming tobacco. Also, boys were more likely to earn money through casual labour compared to girls.

About a sixth of learners (17%) were involved in IGA, and, with exception of Chikwawa, these were predominately boys. Boys were also generally involved in a wider range of IGA compared to girls.

3. LEARNERS' SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

3.1. Literacy and Numeracy Skills

Learners' literacy and numeracy skills were assessed using a series of questions of increasing difficulty equivalent to test items previously used to measure mastery of basic pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills and competency in Standards 1, 3 and 5 of the formal primary curriculum (See Methodology, Section 1.4.4. for more detailed description). The ability of various groups of learners to correctly answer these questions provides important baseline data for measuring the improvement of these skills during the CBE pilot, as well as indicating current levels of competency and highlighting areas or groups that might need particular attention.

Table 3.1 lists the mean percentage of learners who correctly answered one or more questions at each level and shows a clear pattern of fairly rapidly decreasing percentages of learners correctly answering questions as the test items became increasingly difficult. In other words, whilst the majority of all learners exhibited basic pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills (74% and 89%, respectively), only a small minority were able to answer questions at Level 3 (equivalent Standard 5). This should not be surprising, since most learners had dropped out of school by, or before, Standard 3.

Table 3.1. Mean percentage of learners who answered correctly one or more questions per level, presented for all learners, non-attendees, younger and older learners.

Level of test items	**All learners** *(n= 452)*	**Non-attendees** *(n=78)*	**Younger learners (9-13 yrs)** *(n=195)*	**Older learners (14-17 yrs)** *(n=255)*
Pre-literacy	74	55	65	83
Pre-numeracy	89	71	80	96
Literacy (Chichewa)				
Level 1	37	14	20	50
Level 2	20	3	7	31
Level 3	13	0.4	3	21
Literacy (English)				
Level 1	24	9	15	31
Level 2	8	2	4	11
Level 3	2	0.4	0.8	2
Numeracy				
Level 1	57	28	36	73
Level 2	22	4	8	33
Level 3	9	2	3	13

It should be noted that the percentage of learners correctly answering questions in Level 1 (equivalent to Standard 1) for Chichewa and English were somewhat skewed by the inclusion of a question that asked the learner to copy out a short phrase[14]. In Chichewa, for example, 58% of learners were able to complete this task, whilst less than a third were able to answer the other two questions in that level. So, it is likely that the proportion of learners who can competently read, write and understand what they have written with equivalence to Standard 1 might be somewhat over estimated. However, generally, learners' responses to test items reflected the corresponding difficulty of the questions and test items produced similar results within each level, showing a strong degree of conformity within the respective levels.

Table 3.1 shows that learners generally fared better in numeracy skills compared to literacy skills. Over half (57%) were able to answer one or more questions in Level 1, which involved basic mathematical operations (such as addition and subtraction), whilst - despite the slight skewing of results mentioned above - only j37% were able to demonstrate the most basic literacy skills in Chichewa, and even fewer in English (24%).

Not surprisingly, as a group, those learners who said they had never attended formal school did not perform as well learners overall. Only just over half could accomplish basic pre-literacy skills and only small minority (14%) were able to answer questions in Chichewa equivalent to Standard 1, whilst only 9% could accomplish simple literacy skills in English. Again this percentage is skewed somewhat by several learners (29%) who were able to copy a sentence in English, whilst, in fact, none were able to read what they had written nor could think of and write any English word they knew. Following the overall trend, non-attendees fared better with numeracy questions, although, whilst the majority (71%) demonstrated basic pre-numeracy skills, less than a third (28%) could answer questions using addition and subtraction and very few (4%) more complicated operations of Level 2 - equivalent of Standard 3 (e.g. multiplication and division).

The majority of learners enrolled with CBE had basic pre-numeracy (86%) and pre-literacy skills (74%). For Chichewa, a significant proportion of learners (40%) were equivalent to Standard 1, although a fifth of learners (20%) were equivalent to Standard 3. For English, only approximately a quarter (24%) of learners were equivalent to English Standard 1, with very few (less than 10%) reaching beyond this level. For numeracy, over half (57%) were able to answer questions equivalent to Standard 1 and a fifth (20%), equivalent to Standard 3. Very few learners were able to answered questions equivalent to Standard 5 (13%, 2%, 9% for Chichewa, English and Numeracy, respectively).

[14] However, this item was retained in order to remain comparable with the formal system assessment, which uses it.

Table 3.2 Mean percentage of learners who answered correctly one or more questions per level, by district and gender.

Level of test items	*Chikwawa*			*Lilongwe*			*Ntchisi*		
	F	*M*	*T*	*F*	*M*	*T*	*F*	*M*	*T*
Pre-literacy	77	70	74	72	73	73	74	77	76
Pre-numeracy	89	87	88	82	85	84	94	94	94
Literacy (Chichewa)									
Level 1	32	35	33	24	34	32	42	48	47
Level 2	21	18	20	19	16	16	18	29	25
Level 3	13	11	12	19	12	11	13	19	17
Literacy (English)									
Level 1	21	21	21	18	23	22	28	28	28
Level 2	7	10	8	10	9	10	5	7	6
Level 3	0.7	0.6	0.6	2	3	3	0	1	0.7
Numeracy									
Level 1	51	48	50	44	55	53	65	70	69
Level 2	16	19	17	12	25	19	26	33	30
Level 3	9	5	7	7	7	7	8	13	12

Table 3.1 also shows marked variation in literacy and numeracy skills between younger and older learners, with younger learners generally performing less well. Since there were approximately equal numbers of older and younger learners amongst non-attendees, however, this cannot be attributed solely to older learners having had more formal schooling (See Table 2.14). Alternatively, older learners may have also attained some skills through interaction with others and everyday experiences like purchasing food. Only two-thirds of younger learners (65%) were able to carry out basic pre-literacy skills compared to vast majority of older learners (83%) and only 15% were able to write their name compared to almost half (47%) of all older learners. Even in numeracy - where most learners fared better - whilst the majority of older learners (73%) could carry out basic mathematical operations equivalent to Standard 1, only just over a third of younger learners (36%) could do the same.

When comparing learners' literacy and numeracy levels by district and gender, Table 3.2 shows that there is relatively little significant variation by gender. In terms of pre-literacy skills, there was little difference between learners from the three districts, although girls performed slightly better than boys in Chikwawa (77% compared to 70%). There was no clear pattern regarding learners' literacy in Chichewa in Chikwawa and Lilongwe: boys scored slightly better at Level 1, whilst, of those fewer learners that reached Level 2, girls scored slightly better. Whilst almost half of learners in Ntchisi (47%) could answer questions equivalent with Standard 1, only around a third of learners in Chikwawa and Lilongwe achieved the same.

With regard to knowledge of English, again a slightly greater percentage of learners in Ntchisi (29%) could read and write simple words compared to Chikwawa and Lilongwe (23% and 21%, respectively), although the difference was less pronounced and a greater proportion of learners from the other districts were able to answer questions from Level 2 (such as filling in a missing word to complete a sentence).

In numeracy skills, however, a significantly greater percentage of learners in Ntchisi again scored comparatively higher than in other districts, with over two-thirds (69%) correctly carrying out basic mathematical operations compared to approximately half of learners in Chikwawa and Lilongwe (50% and 53%, respectively). Greater numeracy skills amongst Ntchisi learners might reflect their greater involvement in IGA (see Table 2.20), particularly small-scale market vending, as well as a greater proportion of older children amongst the learners (see Table 2.2).

Looking at different sub-groups, pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills were almost universal amongst older learners. In contrast, only just over half of non-attendees (54%) could demonstrate pre-literacy skills. Less than 20% of non-attendees and younger learners had literacy skills in Chichewa equivalent to Standard 1. Few learners exhibited literacy skills in English, although a third of older learners were able to demonstrate some basic knowledge of English equivalent to Standard 1. Learners in all groups generally fared better with questions on numeracy, with over half of all learners (57%) able to complete mathematical operations equivalent to Standard 1. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi a greater proportion of boys were able to demonstrate numeracy skills compared to girls. Learners in Ntchisi generally had better literacy and numeracy skills than the other two districts.

3.2. Learners' attitudes in core learning areas.

As well as assessing the learners' levels of literacy and numeracy skills, a few questions, were asked to get an *indication* of learners' attitudes in relation to issues corresponding to key developmental outcomes outlined in the CBE Curriculum and Assessment Framework. These include basic life skills, the demonstration of health promoting attitudes and behaviour in their personal lives and communities and environmental awareness and stewardship.

Table 3.3: Number and percentage of learners that agree with the statement: boys are more intelligent than girls (n= 186 girls, 265 boys, 451 total)

District	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	71	70	40	73	111	71
Lilongwe	14	41	77	66	91	61
Ntchisi	20	39	66	70	86	59
All districts	**105**	**56**	**183**	**69**	**288**	**64**

Firstly, in order to assess learners' gender awareness, learners were asked whether they thought

boys were more intelligent than girls. Table 3.3 shows that the majority of learners (64%), more of whom were boys, agreed with this statement (69% of boys compared to 56% of girls). Thus, a significant proportion of girls, also agreed with this statement, particularly in Chikwawa, where a large majority (70%) said they agreed that boys are more intelligent than girls. This presumably reflects deep-rooted socio-cultural stereotyping and has implications for the teaching of self-efficacy and other life skills amongst girls.

Table 3.4: Number and percentage of learners that agree with the statement: those planning to marry should first go for a blood test to know their HIV status (n= 187 girls, 265 boys, 452 total)

District	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	85	84	43	78	128	82
Lilongwe	16	47	76	66	92	61
Ntchisi	34	65	77	82	111	76
All districts	**135**	**72**	**196**	**74**	**331**	**73**

Table 3.4 shows that, in terms of health promoting behaviour and life skills, the majority of learners (73%) are well aware of the importance of knowing their HIV status, although a lesser proportion of learners in Lilongwe agreed with this compared to the other districts, particularly amongst the girls (only 48% of girls in Lilongwe agreed that couples planning to marry should go for HIV test). In Chikwawa a greater proportion of girls agreed with this statement; in Ntchisi, a greater proportion of boys.

Still relating to health, Table 3.5 shows that only around a third of learners (334%) disagreed with the statement that drinking water drawn from the river is not harmful. Therefore, conversely, the majority of learners *did* agree that river water is not safe for drinking. However, this varied between districts: in Chikwawa, only 54% believed that river water was unsafe, compared to 69% of learners in Lilongwe and 76% of learners in Ntchisi. Thus, interestingly, a greater awareness that river water is unsafe for drinking was found where the highest proportion of learners use river water as their source of drinking water (see Table 2.9).

Table 3.5: Number and percentage of learners that agree with the statement: drinking water drawn straight from the river does you no harm (n= 187 girls, 265 boys, 452 total)

District	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	44	44	27	49	71	46
Lilongwe	12	35	34	29	46	31
Ntchisi	13	25	22	23	35	24
All districts	**69**	**37**	**83**	**31**	**152**	**34**

Finally, Table 3.6 shows that almost half of girls (48%) agreed that it is *not* good to have a woodlot since it reduces the amount of land available for farming, whilst that majority of boys (63%) *disagreed* with the statement. This shows that girls generally had less awareness of the importance of tree planting and keeping woodlots for villages and/or households, except in Ntchisi where a

slightly lesser proportion of girls compared to boys agreed that keeping a woodlot was *not* good. Awareness of the importance of maintaining woodlots was lowest amongst learners in Chikwawa.

Table 3.6: Number and percentage of learners that agree with the statement: having a woodlot is not good, since it wastes land otherwise available for farming (n= 187 girls, 265 boys, 452 total)

District	Female		Male		Total	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Chikwawa	59	58	34	62	93	60
Lilongwe	15	44	30	26	45	30
Ntchisi	15	29	33	35	38	33
All districts	**89**	**48**	**97**	**37**	**186**	**41**

Approximately two-thirds of learners exhibited a lack of gender awareness, agreeing that boys are more intelligent than girls. In terms of health, two-thirds of learners were aware that river water is an unsafe source of drinking water. The majority of learners were also aware of the importance of knowing one's HIV status prior to marriage. Only half of girls demonstrated environmentally aware attitudes compared to two-thirds of boys.

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to collect benchmark data for teaching and learning outcomes, classroom observations were carried out at all learning centres. These observations focused on key aspects of a learner-centred methodology, on which the facilitators had received an initial three-week orientation, as well as issues of facilitators' lesson preparation and planning, use of resources and gender awareness and learner participation. It should be stressed that this exercise was not intended as any sort of formal assessment of the facilitators, but merely to collect baseline measures by which future, expected improvements in lesson delivery can be evaluated[15].

The classroom observations were systematic and made use of observation sheets that contained different aspects of teaching and learning including: lesson planning and progress, learner-centredness of lessons, teaching and learning resources used, support for learners, learner participation, gender, evaluation, knowledge in terms of confidence of the facilitator and use of required teaching methods (skills). The observations under each of these aspects were scored as follows: 0 = not done; 1= poor; 2 = satisfactory; 3 = very good (see appendix for copy of observation form). The findings of the lesson observations are discussed according to the sections evaluated.

4.1 Lesson planning and progress

Table 4.1 summarises the findings on lesson planning and progress. In general, slightly over half of the facilitators scored satisfactory or above on following lesson plan in lesson delivery and close to half (47%) had a similar score on time allocation to core part of the lesson. However only about slightly over a third (33%) scored satisfactory and above on appropriate time allocation for each task. These findings are encouraging, given that the observations were carried out on the first few days of teaching. It is possible that the facilitators would perform better after a few weeks' experience more especially on time allocation for each task. Facilitator orientation on time allocation to tasks aspects might however have to be emphasized during termly in-service training.

Table 4.1: Lesson Planning and Progress

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Follows lesson plan during lesson delivery	55
Appropriate time allocation for each task	33
Adequate time given to core part of lesson	47

[15] Similar class observations will be used by CBE supervisors to follow the progress of the facilitators towards expected teaching and learning outcomes and to inform in-service training regarding training needs of facilitators.

4.2 Use of learner-centred approach

From the findings summarized in Table 4.2, the use of a learner- centred approach by the facilitators was largely limited to circulating while learners are busy on task and regularly giving praise once the learners have given a correct answer. However, more is demanded of this approach in that it has to start right away from setting an environment that is conducive, including existence of mutual respect amongst learners and between learners and facilitators - by, for example, ensuring that learners do not make derogatory comments or laugh at fellow learners and that facilitators respect learners' comments and requests, whilst dealing with possible discipline issues in a polite manner without resorting to harsh admonishments. In addition learner-centred approaches require that learners know what they are supposed to do and what the outcomes of that learning will be. Again from Table 4.2, only about a fifth (20%) of facilitators managed to explain the outcomes to the learners. This seems to be because the lesson notes themselves do say explicitly that listed outcomes should be explained to learners. It is not surprising therefore that ensuring that all learners are busy throughout lessons was problematic: learners are kept busy if they know what they are doing and they have a target to achieve (an outcome) by the end of the activity or lesson.

Table 4.2: Use of Learner-centred approach

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Explained expected outcomes of topic	20
Draws on learners' existing knowledge, skills & experience	53
Ensures all learners busy throughout lessons	40
Circulates while learners are busy on a task	73
Regularly give praise for learners' efforts	67
Mutual respect exist between facilitator and learners.	40

4.3. Use of teaching and learning resources

The teaching and learning situation makes use of various resources, including human and material resources, for the betterment of achieving the learning outcomes. During the baseline survey, only slightly above half (53%) of the facilitators satisfactorily used teaching and learning resources appropriately to promote understanding by the learners (see Table 4.3). Lack of adequate materials partly contributed to this especially for facilitators in Ntchisi. However, where materials were inadequate, and just as a way of stimulating interest, use of locally teaching and learning materials is emphasized. During the baseline survey, just under a third (29%) of the facilitators scored satisfactory and above on use of these materials, although there is a need to train the facilitators more on these issues.

Table 4.3: Use of Teaching and Learning Resources

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Uses T&L resources appropriate to task to promote easy understanding	53
Uses locally available T&L resources to stimulate interest	29

4.4 Provision of support to learners

The majority of the facilitators were yet to reach the appropriate level of providing support to learners in the classrooms during the baseline survey, perhaps since they were just beginning. For example, from Table 4.4, only 20% of the facilitators were responsive to the varied range of abilities of the learners (slow and fast learners) and could systematically assess their progress. In addition, although praise was regularly given to the learners after giving a correct answer (see Table 4.2), a satisfactory level of appropriate feedback in terms of learning progress of the different ability learners was given only by slightly over a third (33%) of the facilitators. This perhaps reflects a lack of practice on the part of facilitators, on how to handle learners of various abilities, ages and experiences, which could be a challenging task even for a properly trained teacher. For CBE to be a success, a lot of thought has to be given to these issues during training and subsequent supervision of the facilitators.

Table 4.4: Provision of Support to Learners

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Responsive to different abilities of learners	20
Slow/fast learners received attention or extra task.	20
Systematically assessment of all learners' progress	20
Provision of feedback to learners on learning progress	33

4.5. Learner participation

Lesson observations during the baseline survey showed that learner participation was limited, with 80% of the lessons observed showing that learners spent more time listening to the facilitator than on activities, and in 66% of the lessons, not all learners participated throughout the lesson (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Learner Participation

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Active encouragement of all learners to participate throughout lesson	33
Learners spend more time on activities than listening to facilitator	20
Learners initiate interactions with facilitator	0

These findings could partly be explained in terms of insufficient use of learner-centred teaching methods as discussed in section 4.2. Where the learner is not clear on what they should do and what the outcomes are, they cannot participate fully throughout the lesson. If lessons are facilitator-centred and the learners are not actively involved in lessons, as opposed to simply listening to the facilitator, chances are high that little meaningful learning would take place. Where there is no meaningful learning, learners would withdraw and not ask any questions, thus not initiating any discussions with the facilitator. This is clearly seen in Table 4.5 where in none of the observed lessons were learner- initiated interactions with the facilitator taking place to a satisfactory degree. One other possible explanation for this however could be that the learners were still not used to their facilitators to initiate any discussion or indeed that the presence of researchers, whom the learners did not know, also influenced them not to ask the facilitator anything. Whatever the reason, it is important that a spirit of initiating discussion be instilled in the learners if sufficient learning is to take place.

4.6. Gender Awareness

Table 4.6 summarises the gender awareness aspect of the facilitators during the baseline survey. The majority of the facilitators ensured that girls and boys have equal share of space (93%) and equal number of questions and tasks (73%). However, few facilitators encouraged mutual respect between girls and boys (40%), sometimes using segregated seating for girls and boys or, in one case reprimanding girls only for being late.

Table 4.6: Gender Awareness

Observations	**Facilitators** *(% scoring satisfactory or above)*
Girls & boys have equal share of available space and writing surfaces	93
Equal numbers of questions/tasks are directed to girls and boys	73
Encouragement of mutual respect between girls and boys	40

The general observation on teaching and learning was encouraging given that the facilitators were observed in the first few days for their work. The majority of facilitators circulated amongst learners during teaching (73%) and regularly gave praise (67%) to a satisfactory level, although less than 50% scored well in other aspects of a learner-centred pedagogy. In terms of gender awareness, facilitators scored high in ensuring that girls and boys got an equal share of class space and any tasks or questions. On average, at least 40% of facilitators scored well in lesson planning and progress of lessons. However, facilitators scored less well in the provision of support for learners of different abilities and making good use of locally-available resources - and active participation of learners was limited. Such observations highlight areas to be addressed in forthcoming in-service training.

5. BASIC EDUCATION UPTAKE IN CATCHMENT AREAS

5.1 Location and catchment areas of learning centres

In line with the conceptualisation of the CBE pilot, five learning centres were opened in each of the three selected districts. The names and location of the centres are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Location of learning centres by district, TA and educational zone

District	T/A	Educational zone	Name of learning centre
Chikwawa	Maseya	Mbewe	Sande
			Namachuwa
			Nkhata
	Katunga	Boma	Ntondeza
			Salumenji
Lilongwe	Kabudula	Kabudula	Kazire
			Bungwe
			Mdyanyama
			Chiotha
			Kadyaulendo
Ntchisi	Kalumo	Makanda	Gwangwa
			Nyalabvu
			Minga
			Chisanja
			Khuwi

In general, the catchment areas for these centres consist of 3-7 villages. The means were 4 villages, 6 villages and 6 villages, for Chikwawa, Lilongwe and Ntchisi, respectively. It should be noted however that despite the large catchment areas in the latter two districts, the learners who have enrolled for CBE have come mainly from 3-4 villages, usually those surrounding the chosen venue for the learning centre.

5.2. Educational status of target age groups

A mini-household survey of the catchment areas[16] gives an idea of how many out of school children and youth in the CBE target age group had actually enrolled for CBE. Data shows that 69% of children between the ages of 9-17 years in the catchment areas, who had not completed primary education beyond Standard 5, were currently attending formal primary schooling (see Table 5.2). Of the 31% of the children in this target group who were out of school, 12 % were enrolled in CBE, with less than 1% were attending other non-formal education activities.

[16] It should be stressed that these figures are indicative only, given that this survey was based on sampling, not a full census of households and that, in some cases, the perceived boundaries of the catchment areas extended beyond where the bulk of learners were drawn from, as catchment areas were extended to find requisite numbers of learners (see Section 6.5)

By district, Table 5.2. shows that for Chikwawa, just over two-thirds of such 9-17 year olds in the catchment areas were in formal schooling, with a greater numbers of boys than girls in school (71% and 61% respectively). Of those outside the formal system, CBE has enrolled a much greater proportion of girls than boys (21 % compared to 9% of boys), thus absorbing many of these female school drop-outs. A small number of girls were attending other non-formal classes, most likely AGLIT. However, approximately 20% of 9 -17 year-olds who had not reached Standard 5 in their schooling – both boys and girls - were still receiving no education, either formal or non-formal, with little differentiation by gender.

Table 5.2: Percentage of 9-17 year-olds in catchment areas*, showing educational status, by learning centre, district and gender**

Learning Centre/ District	Formal School (%)			CBE (%)			Other Non-formal (%)			Out-of-School (%)		
	F	*M*	*T*	*F*	*M*	*T*	*F*	*M*	*T*	*F*	*M*	*T*
Chikwawa												
Sande	55.0	64.3	55.2	29.8	5.5	16.6	2.3	0	1.1	28.2	30.2	27.1
Namatchuwa	55.8	72.0	64.2	17.5	9.1	13.1	0.8	0	0.4	25.8	18.9	22.1
Nkhata	56.3	66.7	61.1	15.5	8.9	12.4	2.1	0	1.1	26.0	24.4	25.3
Ntondeza	63.2	74.1	69.3	23.1	11.6	16.7	0	0	0	13.7	14.3	14.0
Salumeji	74.0	80.0	77.2	13.5	8.7	11.0	0	0	0	12.5	11.3	11.9
***All centres** (n= 1,277)*	***60.7***	***71.4***	***64.9***	***20.0***	***8.9***	***14.1***	***1.1***	***0***	***0.5***	***22.0***	***19.8***	***20.4***
Lilongwe												
Kazire	78.1	57.4	68.7	5.9	12.9	8.6	0	0	0	16.0	29.7	22.3
Bungwe	56.9	66.7	61.3	13.8	8.3	10.5	0	0	0	30.8	25.0	28.1
Mdyanyama	80.5	65.4	73.2	3.5	14.0	8.6	0	0	0	15.9	20.6	18.2
Chiotha	84.5	73.0	78.9	2.9	10.4	6.0	0	0	0	12.6	16.5	15.2
Kadyaulendo	75.5	72.3	74.0	8.5	10.6	9.5	0	0	0	16.0	17.0	16.5
All centres (n= 1,095)	***74.4***	***67.0***	***71.0***	***7.2***	***11.2***	***8.8***	***0***	***0***	***0***	***18.7***	***21.7***	***20.3***
Ntchisi												
Gwangwa	74.2	78.6	74.3	9.8	6.4	8.1	0	0	0	16.7	19.3	17.3
Nyalabvu	73.1	65.7	69.8	15.7	25.9	20.2	0	0	0	11.2	8.3	9.9
Mingu	77.3	73.5	75.4	8.4	8.8	8.6	0	0	0	14.2	17.7	16.4
Chisanja	65.8	71.3	64.9	18.9	12.6	15.4	0	0	0	15.3	17.2	15.4
Khuwi	74.1	69.7	71.9	17.6	17.4	17.5	0	0	0	8.3	12.8	10.6
All centres (n= 1,171)	***73.5***	***72.2***	***71.5***	***13.9***	***13.8***	***13.7***	***0***	***0***	***0***	***13.2***	***15.2***	***14.0***

*as % of total no. of 9-17 year-olds in sample households in catchment area for Learning Centre.

** mean no. of 9 -17 year-olds per district as % of mean total no. of 9-17 year-olds in sample households in catchment areas in district.

Table 5.2. shows that overall, enrolment in CBE learning centres ranged from 20% in Nyalabvu in Ntchisi to 6% in Chiotha in Lilongwe, with significant variation between and within districts. Such variation requires further follow-up to elicit possible reasons for differences in enrolment between centres and highlight the community-related factors that promoted enrolment. Furthermore, the table shows that within the cluster of Learning Centres for Chikwawa, there was some degree of variation. Around Salumeji, for example, a relatively high number of 9-17 year –olds were attending formal schooling. Of those who were out of school (23%) approximately half (11%) were attending CBE. In Sande, in contrast, there was poor uptake of formal schooling: only just over half of 9-17 year-olds were attending school and a greater proportion of these were boys. Of those girls that were out of school (45%), just under a third (30%) had enrolled for CBE and, whilst a greater proportion of boys were attending formal school, only 5% of boys had enrolled in CBE, leaving about a third (30%) of boys out of school. This reflects a trend in Chikwawa that shows that girls were more likely to enrol in CBE compared to boys.

In both Lilongwe and Ntchisi, approximately 70% of 9-17 year-olds from the households sampled were in the formal school system. In Lilongwe, however, fewer boys were attending formal school than girls (67% and 74%, respectively). In some catchment areas as much as 85% of girls were in formal schooling. One possible reason for this could be the presence of school-feeding programmes in the catchment area, for example at Mdyanyama and Chiotha primary schools, that could favour girls. The one exception was around Bungwe Learning Centre where only approximately 60% of girls were in formal schools compared to 67% of boys and this school had no feeding programme. In Bungwe, as in Chikwawa Learning Centres, more girls out-of-school saw a corresponding greater proportion enrolled in CBE. However, amongst all other Learning Centres in Lilongwe, a greater proportion of boys from the catchment areas had enrolled in CBE, compared to girls. This seems to indicate that CBE is indeed enrolling proportionally more from groups more likely to be out of school in a catchment area. However, despite this, in Lilongwe, as in Chikwawa, approximately 20% of 9-17 year-olds are receiving no schooling, either formal or non-formal.

Amongst Learning Centres in Ntchisi there is no clear pattern of gender differentiation of educational status: in three locations more girls than boys were attending formal schools; in two more boys were attending compared to girls. At one Learning Centre, Nyalabvu, where a relatively low percentage of boys from the catchment area were attending formal schools (66%), this saw a much greater proportion of boys enrolled with CBE (26%) compared to catchment areas of other Learning Centres. However, apart from this, no real pattern for CBE enrolment emerges, according to gender. Overall, the percentage of 9-17 year-olds not receiving any schooling is lower in Ntchisi than in the other two districts, at 14%.

In CBE catchment areas, 69% of all 9-17 yr-olds who had not completed primary school beyond Standard 5 were currently attending primary school and of the remaining 31%, almost half (12% overall) had enrolled for CBE. However, approximately 20% of 9-17 yr-olds who had not completed primary school beyond Standard 5 in the catchments areas in Chikwawa and Lilongwe, and 14% in Ntchisi, were receiving no education, either formal or non-formal, indicating further potential demand for CBE.

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF LEARNING CENTRES

In addition to baseline data presented above, interviews with community and district-level key informants provided local perspectives and information on the several outputs related to the establishment of the learning centres. A checklist also collected information on the learning centre venue, its management and the availability of resources, to inform quality control indicators.

6.1. Sensitisation and mobilization activities

Sensitisation and mobilisation was one of the central activities that had to be carried out as part of the implementation strategies for CBE (see project conceptualization documents) being a new programme in the country. These activities were expected to take place at both community and district levels with the aim of informing the various stakeholders about the programme and its objectives as well as seek their commitment in its implementation. During the baseline study, a question was asked to various key informants about the nature of activities that had taken place at these two levels.

6.1.1 District level sensitisation

At district level, there efforts made to sensitise district stakeholders, although there were some difficulties in coordinating activities in line with differing procedures across districts and reaching all actors to be involved. For example, for Chikwawa, the coordinating PEA argued that there was an attempt to sensitise the district level stakeholders about CBE. The CBE co-ordinator, based at the Ministry of Education headquarters, briefed the district education office about CBE, attended a meeting of the District Executive Committee which was attended by members from all Area Development Committees from all TAs, as well as MPs where he again briefed them on CBE. However, it is not clear whether or not there were other activities to this effect within the district. All this shows a difficulty in arranging of activities at district level, something that is also evident for Lilongwe. For example, the findings for Lilongwe show that only the district education office and the PEAs were sensitized. Although there was talk of some communication to the DEC members especially in relation to selection of target areas for CBE, this was limited to the involvement of the Director of Planning and Development. Sensitization did not always reach all members since, as the DEM for Lilongwe rural west argued,

> *'it is not ripe yet to inform the whole assembly. We shall do so after the programme has started and we want to roll out. This is the time the district assembly is going to be involved in deciding where the project will go'*.

This thinking however reflects a misunderstanding on behalf of the district of what the role of the DEC in the pilot stage going to be. Surely the DEC would need to know about the pilot project, its weaknesses and strengths, so as to get involved in deciding the possibility for a roll-out. In Ntchisi, there were briefing meetings with PEAs, Community Development Assistants and the District Commissioner although the nature of these meetings was not clearly elaborated upon by the respondents.

6.1.2 Community level sensitisation

The findings show that at community level, sensitization and mobilization activities had taken place in a similar way in the three districts, with some flexibility regarding the level of involvement of community leaders depending the expectations from the communities. The district level stakeholders, including the implementing agency (AGLIT for Chikwawa and Lilongwe; World Relief for Ntchisi); the district assembly through community development officers; and the Ministry of Education headquarters (represented the CBE co-ordinator), visited the communities surrounding each learning centre for sensitization meetings. The meetings were attended by a cross-section of people in the catchment areas including group village headmen, village headmen, community members and head teachers of surrounding schools. At these meetings, the community was informed about CBE, its objectives, the target group of pupils and expectations from the community including election of LCMC and in some cases, identification of possible facilitators for the learning centres. Despite this commonality, the activities that took place after the initial meeting varied from centre to centre and even from village to village in the catchment areas. There was no single pattern of activities. There were, for example, some few village headmen in Lilongwe who, after going back to their villages, held follow-up meetings with their people. Others worked through the elected LCMC to sensitise the families that had children who fell in the target group of CBE learning centres, while for others, the big initial sensitization meeting was deemed sufficient. In general however, it was found that the majority of the village headmen worked through the LCMC to effect further sensitization in their communities, so that communities were aware of forthcoming CBE activities and the opening of the centres..

6.2. Election of Learner Centre Management Committee (LCMC)

As part of the guidelines for managing CBE learning centres, communities were expected to elect a Learning Centre Management Committee. It was found, during the baseline survey, that in all the 15 learning centres, the LCMC had been elected. The election procedure was the same at all learning centres in the three districts. It took place during the initial sensitisation and mobilisation meetings and involved voting, the number of candidates ranged between 3-5 members for each post.

Table 6.1. Criteria for electing LCMC members

Criteria	% response per District		
	Chikwawa (n=10)	Lilongwe (n=10)	Ntchisi (n=10)
Commitment to development work	60	n/a*	10
Hardworking	60	40	60
Disciplined	30	50	40
Empathetic	n/a*	20	n/a*
Trustworthy	60	n/a*	10
Ability to work in a team	20	n/a*	n/a*
No criminal record e.g. theft	30	10	10
Not a drunkard	30	20	n/a*
Permanent residence in catchment area	10	n/a*	n/a*

n/a*: no respondent mentioned these during the interviews

The criteria for choosing the individuals varied, although not mutually exclusive. For all the three districts, the emphasis was on members of the community who are hardworking and disciplined (see Table 6.1). However as can be seen from Table 6.1, for Chikwawa, commitment to development work and trustworthiness of the members were also mentioned frequently as criteria used for selection. Furthermore, it was noted that gender balance was one of the criterion for the election of the LCMC in all the learning centres. In general, all LCMCs in Chikwawa and Lilongwe had elected members according to this criterion: 5 women and 5 men. In Ntchisi, this varied somewhat although they maintained an approximate gender balance at a ratio of either 4:6, or 6:4, women to men

At the start of the baseline survey, most LCMC members had not been orientated in their roles and responsibilities as training had not yet occurred, although in Lilongwe and Ntchisi, training was underway by the first week of term and in Chikwawa it was scheduled for the following week.

Sensitisation and mobilisation activities at the community level were carried out in all target areas and included village heads, implementing agencies, community development assistants and Ministry of Education representation. Sensitisation of district-level stakeholders had also been done, but in a more flexible manner. Following community mobilisation, Learning Centre Management Committees (LCMC) were elected for all 15 Learning Centres. Training of LCMCS took place during the first and second weeks of terms.

6.3 Community participation in recruitment of facilitators

As was the case with initial sensitization meetings, a similar process of recruiting facilitators was employed for the three districts, although there was some variation within the local context. As a matter of procedure, the post of facilitator and its requirements (e.g. a JCE and/or MSCE certificate) were announced at the initial sensitisation meetings held at each of the learning centres. There were however slight variations in terms of how the applications were handled. In Chikwawa for example, the community was informed about the post and its requirements and the members of the community who felt that they qualified, were asked to apply through the village headmen who later submitted the applications to a district committee. For Lilongwe, the possible candidates for the post were identified at the sensitization meetings by the various community members including village headmen and head teachers and these were asked to write application letters and submit them to the head teacher of a nearby school where they were collected by the district team for shortlisting and interviews. For Ntchisi, there were varied approaches to recruitment activities, with half of the respondents stating that the community members together with the village headmen selected the candidates who were then interviewed by an external group of people and the other half explaining that that it was an open advertisement where those with MSCE or JCE were asked to write letters of application to Teacher Development Centres (TDCs) and thereafter the shortlisted candidates attended interviews. The latter was true for Nyalavu and Khuwi learning centres.

Following the submission of applications, the applicants were short listed by a team consisting of a member from the implementing agency (usually the one appointed to be supervisor), the CBE desk

officer from the Ministry and other district level officials.

The general impression from the community key informants was that in Lilongwe and Ntchisi, no community member was involved in the shortlisting, conducting of interviews and final selection of the facilitators. This finding was however contradicted by the findings from the district level informants for Lilongwe who argued that the communities were represented, through the GVH (Kabudula) who was there as an observer. This contradiction suggests that there was inadequate feedback to communities about this part of the process. It is possible that the community members did not realize that the GVH participated and even if they did, they may not have thought that he was doing so on their behalf. For Chikwawa, although 90 % of the community level respondents argued that they were not directly involved in the interview process of the recruitment of facilitators, there was one village headman (for Nkhata learning centre) who acknowledged that he took part in these activities, but as an observer. This finding was in agreement with what one of the district level key informants said that one chief and one community member were involved as observers. However, it is not clear whether these two members were representing communities of all learning centres or just Nkhata learning centre. Similarly, in Ntchisi, although all community key informants argued that no community member was involved, the PEA for the area said that the headteacher of Makanda primary school participated in the short listing of the candidates although for the actual interviews, he was just aware of the presence of a community representative, who was a member of the LCMC committee.

During sensitisation meetings the post of facilitator was announced and suitably-qualified community members asked to apply. In Lilongwe and some centres in Ntchisi, community members were involved in identifying those possible candidates. Community members were largely unaware of any community involvement in shortlisting, interviewing or final selection of facilitators, although, according to district stakeholders, at least one community member had been involved in some of these processes.

6.4. Facilitator characteristics

In total, 30 facilitators were recruited for CBE, although one facilitator dropped out following the offer of further education elsewhere. Of the 29 facilitators in place, 10 (35%) were female and 19 (66%) were male. Whilst the policy was that each centre should have one male and one female facilitator, this was not achievable with all learning centres. In Chikwawa in particular, there were no qualified female applicants at some centres. It is interesting to note that four out of five learning centres in Lilongwe and Ntchisi, however, had one male and one female facilitator, a situation that could potentially facilitate girls' learning.

Table 6.2 shows that approximately equal numbers of facilitators have either JCE or MSCE qualifications. A greater number of male facilitators are MSCE holders, compared to female facilitators (58% and 40%, respectively). Across the three districts JCE and MSCE holders are found in approximately equal numbers (see list of Facilitator Details in Appendix).

Table 6.2: Number and percentage of facilitators according to qualification, by gender.

Qualification	Female		male		Total	
	No	*%*	*No*	*%*	*no*	*%*
MSCE	4	40	11	58	15	52
JCE	6	60	8	42	14	48
Total	10	100	19	100	29	100

* as % of female, male and total facilitators.

In terms of age, most facilitators are young. Ages range from 20 to 35 years, with the mean age as 26 years. There is no significant variation in this between districts.

Since the facilitators were recruited locally, over a third (38%) said they stay in the same village where the Learning Centre is located., whilst over half of all facilitators were staying at the next village (55%). Only two facilitators were staying further away: one at a nearby trading centre and one elsewhere, at a distance of greater than 2 kms. Reflecting this, the majority of facilitators (59%) said they stayed less than 0.5 km from the learning centre, whilst almost all (97%) stayed less than 2 km from the learning Centres. In Ntchisi a greater proportion of facilitators (70%) stayed less than 0.5km compared to Lilongwe and Chikwawa, where only approximately half of all facilitators stayed less than 0.5km from the learning centres.

Recruited facilitators were generally young, less than 35 years-old, with a mean age of 26 years. Approximately equal numbers were either JCE or MSCE holders and two-thirds (66%) were male. The vast majority (92%) of facilitators lived close to their respective learning centres, either in the same village or a neighbouring one.

6.5. Enrolment of learners

Although, as with the facilitator selection, the initial approach to the enrolment of learners varied slightly across the three districts, according to local situations, the final process was the same across all of them. For example, in Chikwawa, the approach was to start the enrolment process at the general sensitization meeting after the community was informed about the eligible candidates. At this stage the enrolment was done by the village headmen and in some cases by the newly elected LCMC. However later, one member from AGLIT office, which is the implementing agency, went to the different centres to register the learners officially.

In Lilongwe, enrolment of learners did not start at the sensitisation meeting. Rather, some families with eligible children were identified at this meeting, sensitized by the newly elected LCMC and sometimes village headmen in individual follow-up meetings, so that when a member from the implementing agency comes, they could send their children for enrolment. Again a member from AGLIT did the final registration of learners, which took place a few weeks later. Enrolment by AGLIT continued even during the time the baseline survey was conducted. In Ntchisi, enrolment started at the sensitization meeting by the CBE Coodinator and the PEA for Makanda zone.

Overall this was a complex and, on occasion, problematic exercise. There appears to have been some differences in interpretation of the numbers of learners to be recruited, whether to a fixed number or as many as were eligible in the area - leading to a situation where, at some centres, repeat visits were made to recruit additional learners or, in Ntchisi, enrolment was extended into

villages further from the site of the learning centre. Enrolment was also hampered by difficulties in ascertaining the age of some of the potential learners either by parents, the learners themselves and those conducting the enrolment. In addition, some community members and their children had higher expectations of CBE, in terms of what would be provided, which did not match what was to be on offer (e.g. food or vocational training). In some cases, in Lilongwe, for example, several primary school children attempted to enrol and had to be later removed from the enrolment list.

Table 6.3: Percentage* and number of out-of-school children and youth enrolled with CBE by gender and age group

Table 6.3 gives total enrolment statistics for all the 15 learning centres by gender and age group. It

Learner Centre	**Younger Learners (9 to 13)**				**Older learners (14-17)**				**All Learners**			
	Female		**male**		**Female**		**male**		**female**		**male**	
	no.	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*	*no.*	*%*
Sande	16	72	6	27	29	74	10	26	45	74	16	26
Namatchuwa	14	64	8	36	8	57	6	43	22	61	14	39
Nkhata	21	64	12	36	17	74	6	26	38	68	18	32
Ntondeza	11	73	4	27	2	29	5	71	13	59	9	41
Salumeji	17	61	11	39	16	89	2	11	33	72	13	28
Chikwawa LCs	**79**	**66**	**41**	**34**	**72**	**71**	**29**	**29**	**151**	**68**	**70**	**32**
Kazire	1	12	7	88	5	16	27	84	6	15	34	85
Bungwe	5	26	14	74	2	11	16	89	7	19	30	81
Mdnyama	2	33	4	67	3	10	26	90	5	14	30	86
Chiotha	1	4	21	95	5	42	7	58	6	18	28	82
Kadyulendo	4	22	14	78	5	28	13	72	9	25	27	75
Lilongwe LCs	**13**	**18**	**60**	**82**	**20**	**18**	**89**	**82**	**33**	**18**	**15**	**82**
Gwangwa	6	60	4	40	13	45	16	55	19	49	20	51
Nyalabvu	6	54	5	46	13	23	43	78	19	28	48	72
Mingu	6	60	4	40	1	4	23	96	7	21	27	79
Chisanja	2	29	5	71	5	31	11	69	7	30	16	70
Khuwi	7	78	2	22	6	60	4	40	13	68	6	32
Ntchisi LCs	**27**	**57**	**20**	**43**	**38**	**28**	**97**	**72**	**65**	**36**	**117**	**64**
TOTAL	**119**	**50**	**121**	**50**	**130**	**38**	**215**	**62**	**249**	**43**	**336**	**57**

is clear from this table that in terms of total enrolment, there is a slightly greater percentage of boys than girls (57% compared to 43% overall). Overall, approximately equal numbers of younger learners are male and female. Amongst older learners, the majority are male (62%). In Chikwawa, majority of learners are female (68%) contrasting with other two districts, where majority are male. For example, in Lilongwe only 18% of learners are female. While both younger and older learners are predominantly female in Chikwawa; in Lilongwe over 80% of both younger and older learners are male. In Ntchisi, a greater proportion of the male learners fall into the older age category (72% compared to 43% of younger learners). In fact, girls slightly outnumber boys amongst younger learners with one exception at Chisanja learning centre where the number of girls is consistently low for both age groups.

In terms of orphanhood, the data from enrolment lists did not differentiate by single or double orphans. Overall, approximately equal numbers of boys and girls were orphans (52% and 48% respectively). When data is segregated by districts the picture that emerges is that for Chikwawa, it is mostly girls who are orphans, for example, over two-thirds (69%) of both younger orphans and older orphans enrolled were female. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi however, it is mostly boys who are orphans, which perhaps follows the enrolment pattern of all learners in the three districts. From these findings, one could reasonably argue that orphanhood is not currently a factor affecting enrolment except perhaps Lilongwe where a lesser proportion of orphans were boys compared to all learners (73% compared to 82%)

Enrolment of learners involved community leaders and LCMC members and, in Ntchisi, the local PEA. In Chikwawa and Lilongwe the final lists of names were drawn up by the implementing agency, AGLIT. Overall more boys than girls enrolled for CBE classes (57 % and 43%, respectively), although in Chikwawa the majority of learners were female (68%). In Ntchisi the greatest proportion of the enrolled learners were older boys (72%), whereas in Lilongwe, boys dominated both age groups.

6.6. Provision of Learning Centre venues

The selection of venues for CBE learning centres started with selection of the TA who was going to host the programme at district level. For Chikwawa, this was done by a team consisting of the CPEA and other members of the district education office, the Assistant Community Development Officer (ACDO) from Community Services and AGLIT. The team went to sensitise local leaders - TAs - on CBE and assess whether there were sufficient numbers of out-of-school children in their areas to warrant setting up CBE centres. Guidelines laid down by CBE assisted them to make a final choice. They made sure that the TAs chosen were areas where no similar intervention was taking place and they also looked for areas where the local leaders appeared willing to support the project. In order to determine which actual villages would host the learning centres, community members were asked to list children qualifying for CBE and when the number of children available was seen, this assisted in finalising those villages to be assisted. In Lilongwe, an initial meeting of all DEMs, the Director of Planning and Development and the Assistant Community Development Officer (ACDO) from Community Services selected three TAs. The second meeting however selected one TA after making use of the guidelines provided to them. These included the socio-economic profile, high pupil drop out rate and presence of village headmen that are development conscious. Similar guidelines were used in Ntchisi although school monthly returns, which gave an

idea of the numbers of children dropping out of school, was used more.

In all 15 learning centres buildings had been provided by communities for use by CBE classes: these included churches and classrooms of nearby primary schools. In Chikwawa, four of the learning centres were locally constructed churches, the majority built of burnt brick and iron sheets, but with mud floors; the one remaining learning centre was a classroom. In Lilongwe, in contrast, four of the learning centres were held in classrooms, all of which, except one, were of good quality; the remaining one was in a local, burnt-brick constructed church. In Ntchisi, all learning centres were held in classrooms of local primary schools, where a recent classroom construction programme had meant that classrooms were available.. The majority of these structures were in relatively good condition. Table 6.4 gives some indication of the quality of the buildings provided.

Table 6.4: Number and percentage of Learning Centre venue with various characteristics, by district (n = 15**).**

Venue characteristics	**Chikwawa**		**Lilongwe**		**Ntchisi**		**All Centres**	
	no	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*
Sufficient size and space for learners	4	80	5	100	4	80	13	87
Well maintained (adequate roofing, clean, swept etc.)	5	100	4	80	3	60	12	80
Accessible to children with disabilities	4	80	4	80	4	80	12	80
Seating arrangements made (forms, chairs, mats etc)	3	60	2	40	3	60	8	53
Source of clean water close by.	5	100	3	60	2	40	10	67
Toilets close by and accessible.	1	20	5	100	4	100	10	67

A summary judgment about the venues is that a majority of the buildings are of adequate size, well maintained and accessible to children with disabilities. However, only approximately half of the buildings have any seats for learners so that in most cases the learners would be seating on the floor. Admittedly, this is uncomfortable, especially for older learners and girls, such as mothers with children, would be at a much greater disadvantage given the common dressing code of skirts and dresses. It would be interesting to note in due course whether this would have any bearing on learner participation at the centres. Whilst all learning centres in Chikwawa have a source of clean water close by, this is true only for three centres in Lilongwe and two in Ntchisi. This reflects learners' descriptions of their communities, where a relatively large number of learners in Ntchisi said that their only source of water was unsafe (unprotected well or surface water) see Table 2.9.

Similarly, in Chikwawa the general lack of toilets at venues reflects the situation in the surrounding communities: half of all learners interviewed said they had no toilet facilities at home (see Table 2.10). The one Learning Centre in Chikwawa, which had access to toilet facilities was situated at a classroom of a nearby primary school. All these findings have implications for teaching and learning. For example, where there are no toilets, learners could absent themselves either in totality or if they feel like visiting the toilet, they would just walk home and not come back. In addition, teaching and practising health and hygiene messages at the learning centres would be problematic.

District stakeholders selected suitable areas for learning centres within their districts in consultation with traditional leaders and community members. Buildings had been provided by communities for use by CBE classes for all learning centres. Buildings were generally of reasonable condition, although not all venues had access to clean water, nor had water provided, and, in Chikwawa, only one learning centre had toilet facilities, reflecting local conditions.

6.7. Resources and record keeping

6.7.1. Availability of resources and equipment

Table 6.5. indicates whether learning centres had *all* expected items for various categories of materials present at the time of the baseline. It shows that almost all the centres had received some basic resources and equipment to start their activities (For full list of resources, see Appendices) although, across the districts, there appears to have been some disparity in distribution of certain items. Whilst all learning centres had received exercise books and writing materials for learners, some learning centres had not yet received some other materials (see Table 6.5). This was a particular problem in Ntchisi where the supervisor had only just been appointed and was not in place to facilitate distribution. This lead to a situation where Ntchisi seemed to have been disadvantaged compared to the other districts in the distribution of teaching and learning resources, since in all its learning centres only some teaching and learning equipment were available - or had to be borrowed - and there was no sports equipment.

Table 6.5: Number and percentage of Learning Centres with *all* resources available, by district. (n=15)

Learning Centres Resources	**Chikwawa**		**Lilongwe**		**Ntchisi**		**All Centres**	
	no	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*
All teaching and learning equipment (chalkboard, duster, ruler etc)[17]	3	60	5	100	0	0	8	53
All Facilitators' materials (manual, organizer bag, records etc.)	2	40	4	80	0	0	6	40
Sports equipment	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	33
Exercise books for learners	5	100	5	100	5	100	15	100
Writing materials for learners (pens, pencils)	5	100	5	100	5	100	15	100
TALULAR	2	40	2	40	3	60	7	47
All consumables (chalk, pens, paper, glue etc.)	1	20	5	100	1	20	7	47

[17] Although not all teaching and learning materials in Ntchisi had been distributed by the time of the baseline, every effort had been made to ensure that activities could proceed without difficulties. For example, in some instances chalkboards were borrowed from the primary schools.

6.7.2 Storage arrangements

According to CBE implementation strategies, local communities are to be held responsible for the safe storage and retrieval of Learning Centre resources. During the baseline survey, questions were asked to establish the storage arrangements for various resources. These indicated that a variety of arrangements were in place. It was found that in Chikwawa, resources are generally kept by the facilitators – this being that case at 4 of the 5 Learning centres. In the remaining case, resources were kept by the treasurer of the LCMC. In Lilongwe, at 3 of the 5 learning Centres, resources were again stored with facilitators. At one Centre resources were with the LCMC, whilst at the other they were stored in locked cupboard at the primary school. In Ntchisi, there as no clear pattern for store arrangements: at some Centres they were shared amongst LCMC members, at others with the facilitators and, again, where classes were at the local primary school, lockable cupboards were used to store some items.

6.7.3 Record keeping

The findings of the baseline survey show that in the vast majority of learning centres, records were kept by the facilitators. A summary of the nature of records kept by the centres is given in Table 3.8. The table shows that it is largely the learner register that is kept at all centres in Chikwawa and Lilongwe, and only 3 centres in Ntchisi. While no other records are kept by the learning centres in Ntchisi and Chikwawa, in Lilongwe it was different: 2 learning centres had a facilitators' register, and one of these (Bungwe learning centre) also had learner performance records and a stockbook/sheet.

Table 6.6.: Number and percentage of Learning Centres with various records available, by district. (n=15)

Learning Centre Records	**Chikwawa**		**Lilongwe**		**Ntchisi**		**All Centres**	
	no	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*	*no*	*%*
Learners Register	5	100	5	100	3	60	13	87
Facilitators Register	0	0	2	40	0	0	2	13
LCMC Register	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learner Performance Records (assessment information)	0	0	1	20	0	0	1	7
Stock book/Sheet	0	0	1	20	0	0	1	7

Whilst the basic materials for classes to proceed were in place in all learning centres, several learning centres were yet to receive additional teaching and learning equipment, facilitatorsômaterials, sports equipment and consumables. In most cases resources were being stored by facilitators, or arrangements were made with local primary schools. Although almost all learning centres had Learner Registers in place, not all expected records were available at the time of the baseline. However, one learning centre had taken the initiative to keep a stock sheet.

7. EXPECTATIONS OF CBE

7.1 Expectations by key informants

7.1.1.Benefits to learners

The various key informants were asked what their expectations were as regards benefits from CBE for the learners. Various responses were evident from both the local and district level key informants (see Table 7.1.) most of which were related to the CBE curriculum and the needs that were identified during the needs assessment study (see Moleni et al, 2005). For instance, literacy and numeracy, which were ranked highest during the needs analysis, became one of the top benefits of learners from CBE in all the three districts and from both groups of key informants. Other benefits to the learners were largely income related through either getting jobs or undertaking other income generating activities as a result of the vocational and business management skills expected to be learnt from CBE, also one of the key areas identified during the needs assessment. There are slight variations by district and type of key informant. At district level, notable variations are seen on learner opportunities to go back to school, which does not appear to be well articulated for Lilongwe when compared with the other two districts. The same is true as regards the benefit of getting jobs after CBE. On type of key informant, the district level informants were more likely to talk about life skills and HIV/AIDS issues especially for Chikwawa, while those in Lilongwe talked more about abstinence from immoral behaviour than the local level key informants.

Table 7.1. CBE benefits for learners by district and type of key informant

Benefit	*Chikwawa (%)*		*Lilongwe (%)*		*Ntchisi (%)*	
	Local N=10	*District N=3*	*Local N=10*	*District N=4*	*Local N=10*	*District N=3*
Know how to read, write, count	90	67	40	75	90	100
Have opportunity to go back to primary school	50	33	10	n/a	30	33
Have opportunities to get jobs	30	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	20	n/a*
Take part in development activities	20	n/a*	40	25	10	n/a*
Improved income and wellbeing through IGAs	40	67	10	50	20	67
Learn life skills and HIV/AIDS issues	n/a*	67	10	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*
Abstain from immoral behaviour and other bad practices	10	33	n/a*	50	n/a*	n/a*

n/a*: no respondent mentioned these during the interviews

7.1.2. Benefits to community

Table 7.2. summarises the benefits to community members of CBE. In general, apart from the two benefits of reading, writing and numeracy and opportunities to go back to school, the benefits to community largely mirrored the benefits to learners. For example, increased income and community wellbeing is one of the benefits most frequently mentioned and mostly in Chikwawa. It was argued by the various key informants that the community would benefit from the jobs and

other income generating activities that the learners will be involved through the trickle down effect but also through getting employment as facilitators. For example, one key informant at Ntondeza learning centre argued thus:

> *'…Moreover when these children are educated they will get better jobs hence, there will be a trickle-down effect in the community and consequently they will contribute to the development of the area'*

Table 7.2. CBE benefits for community by district and type of key informant

Benefit	*Chikwawa (%)*		*Lilongwe (%)*		*Ntchisi (%)*	
	Local N=10	*District N=3*	*Local N=10*	*District N=4*	*Local N=10*	*District N=3*
Increased income and wellbeing through the IGAs and jobs obtained by learners; employment of community members	70	67	n/a*	25	40	n/a*
Improved participation of community in development work	30	33	n/a*	25	50	33
Reduction in crime rate and other bad practices in community	20	n/a*	30	25	n/a*	33
Reduction in prevalence of HIV/AIDS	10	n/a*	n/a*	25	n/a*	n/a*
Infrastructure of CBE part of community development	10	n/a*	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a*
Increased respect for the community (due to presence of many educated people)	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	1	n/a*
Community will get assistance on issues of literacy and numeracy	n/a*	n/a*	1	n/a*	1	n/a*
Reduced population due to reduction in early marriages in the community	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	n/a*	1	n/a*

n/a*: no respondent mentioned these during the interviews

Another benefit was related to improved community participation in development activities. In general, it was realized by the respondents that a literate person is better able to participate in development activities so that the more people get educated in the community, the more they would participate in development activities, a finding that was frequently mentioned in Chikwawa and Ntchisi. For instance, one local key informant at Chisanja learning centre argued thus;

> '*The wider community will benefit as there will be a great number of literate people who will take part in developing our community'*

Other benefits included reduction in bad practices since the children and youth will be kept busy resulting in better community, mostly mentioned in Lilongwe, just was the case with learners, reflecting the bad aspects of 'nyau' dance. Other benefits included reduction in preventable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, and reduction in fertility rates.

7.2 Expectations by CBE learners

CBE learners were asked two questions relating to their expectations from CBE. One question was on expectations in terms of what they thought their benefits would be from the CBE programme; while the second was on what they would want to do after completion of CBE. The findings as regards benefits from CBE are summarized in Table 3.17. Overwhelmingly, the findings from this Table show that majority of the learners (75% in total) expect to learn how to read and write, a finding that is in line with that from the key informants (see Table 3.15). The other benefits are mentioned only sporadically with continuing with education and having a brighter future following on from reading and writing. There are some slight gender differences with relatively more boys than girls hoping for continuation with education (5% and 2% respectively) and getting employment (5% and 1% respectively) as benefits from CBE. On the other hand, relatively more girls than boys thought about trivial matters such as getting balls and gifts (2% and 0.4% respectively) as benefits from CBE. Other benefits mentioned included assist parents in fieldwork (2), be given food (2), make new friends (3) and learn cookery (2).

Table 7.3.: List of Learners' expectations of how they will benefit from CBE, showing number and percentage of learners, by gender *(n=187 female, 263 boys, 450 total).*

Expectations of CBE	**Female**		**Male**		**Total**	
	No	*%*	*No*	*%*	*No*	*%*
Will learn to read and write	143	76	193	73	336	74
Get employed	1	1	13	5	14	3
Get balls/gifts	4	2	1	0.4	5	1
Will continue with education	3	2	14	5	17	4
Will make new friends	1	0.5	2	0.8	3	0.7
Will have brighter future	6	3	9	3	15	3
Will speak good English	1	0.5	2	0.8	3	0.7
No response	22	12	26	10	48	11

When asked what they would like to do in the future, upon completion of CBE, the greatest proportion of learners indicated that they would either want to get employment or start their own business (16% and 15% respectively), as shown in Table 7.4.. These views were implicit in the findings from the key informants who argued for increased wellbeing of learners and community through income generating activities and small scale businesses (See Tables 7.1 and 7.2). Only a small minority (10%) said that they would wish to go back to school and continue with their education and, of these, a greater proportion were boys (12% compared to 6% of girls), again reflecting the findings from the key informants. Those few that indicated that they wished to return to school were both older and younger learners, in approximately equal numbers. There was, in general, little difference in the answers given according to the age of the respondent, apart from those interested in starting their own small businesses: amongst the girls, the majority of these were older girls (19% of girls 14 or over, compared to 3% of girls 13 or less). Furthermore, all these older girls were from Chikwawa district.

Table 7.4.: Number and percentage of learners indicating what they would like to do on completion of CBE, by gender. *(n=187 female, 263 boys, 450 total)*

What learners would like to do in future, after CBE.	Female		Male		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Get employed	27	14	47	18	74	16
Start business	21	11	45	18	66	15
Continue with education/school	12	6	31	12	43	10
Farming	1	0.5	16	6	17	4
Get married	8	4	4	2	12	3
Specific Occupation named						
Teacher	28	15	33	12	61	14
Health worker (doctor,nurse)	28	15	9	3	37	8
Driver	2	1	18	7	20	4
Extension worker (government).	3	2	8	3	10	2
Office/secretarial work	3	2	2	0.8	5	1
No response	39	21	26	10	65	14

Approximately a third of all learners named a specific occupation when asked what they would want to do in the future. From Table 3.18 it is clear that these are heavily influenced by both professionals they would come across most frequently in their daily lives, and along gender lines. For example, a greater proportion of girls expressed the wish to become nurses (15% of girls compared to 3% of boys), whilst more boys said they would like to be drivers (7% of boys compared to just 1% of girls). However, becoming a teacher was a popular choice for both boys and girls, although, this was less popular in Chikwawa where more of the learners who mentioned a specific occupation– mainly girls - expressed a preference to become health workers

Across the districts, a greater proportion of learners in Lilongwe (15%) showed an interest in returning to school compared to Chikwawa and Ntchisi (5% and 8% respectively). This interest was noted by both boys (15%) and girls (18%). As noted earlier, the starting up of small businesses was a popular answer from older girls in Chikwawa. In Lilongwe and Ntchisi, however, this interest mainly came from the boys, with only 3 girls in Ntchisi saying they were interested in starting small businesses. A slightly greater number of learners in Ntchisi and Chikwawa said they wished to become skilled artisans compared to those in Lilongwe.

Expectations of CBE are high and clearly focused. Learners expect to benefit by learning to read and write and, through improved skills, gain employment or start their own income-generating activities. Relatively few learners expected to continue with their education on completion of CBE. District and community stakeholders also expect the wider community to benefit in a variety of ways.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this baseline survey was to gather data for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of CBE activities, including indicators to evaluate processes involved in the establishment of the learning centres. In doing so, it has also provided useful contextual information on the backgrounds, experiences and expectations of learners, which can assist future planning and implementation of CBE activities.

This following section briefly summarises the main findings of the survey in relation to the key indicators under investigation. Most of the findings express baseline data and, as such, simply provide a benchmark from which future outcomes and impact will be evaluated. However, several indicators relate to programme outputs for the establishment of the learning centres, in particular the mobilisation of local government and communities. These are listed in Table 4.1. below.

Generally, most activities regarding the establishment of the learning centres had been completed by the time of the survey, although one or two activities, such as the training of LCMC members and the distribution of all teaching and learning materials, were still outstanding.

8.1. Establishment of Learning Centres

Sensitisation and mobilisation activities at the community level were carried out in all target areas and included village heads, implementing agencies, community development assistants and Ministry of Education representation. Sensitisation of district-level stakeholders, which included local government representatives, had been done, but in a less uniform or complete manner. Following community mobilisation, Learning Centre Management Committees (LCMC) were elected for all 15 Learning Centres. Generally this was done according required criteria, and, overall, the committees were gender-balanced. By the time of the survey, orientation of LCMC members in all districts had not been done, however, training was to commence imminently and follow-up should now indicate that all members have indeed been orientated. One initial consequence of this was that, despite the expectation that learning centre resources should be the responsibility of LCMC members, in most cases resources were being stored by facilitators turn, it was found to be more practical, in many cases, for facilitators to store some of the resources, although overall responsibility was to remain with the LCMC. In addition, during sensitisation meetings the post of facilitator was announced and suitably-qualified community members asked to apply. In Lilongwe and some centres in Ntchisi, community members were actually involved in identifying and proposing possible candidates. This was not done in Chikwawa, where interested candidates simply applied directly. Efforts were made to include at least one community member in the interview session for facilitators in the role of participant observer Apart from one district, LCMC members themselves were not involved and community stakeholders were largely unaware of community involvement in recruitment of facilitators, reflecting inadequate communication within communities regarding the processes involved.

Table 8.1. List of indicators for establishment of learning centres and quality of learning environment

Core indicator	Sub- indicator	Status
2.1.Sensitisation activities conducted.	Sensitisation activities held in all target communities	yes
	Sensitisation activities held with local government representatives in target districts.	yes
2.2.Learner Centres selected and equipped.	District Assemblies identify target areas for CBE.	Identification done by DEC representatives.
	Communities identify venues for learning centres.	yes
	All T&L materials, record-keeping materials and equipment distributed to all learning centres.	Basic materials available
2.3.Learning Centre Management Committees established and functional.	No. of LCMCs elected by communities, according to criteria	all (15)
	No. of LCMC members orientated on roles and responsibilities.	In progress
2.4. Facilitators selected in consultation with communities.	Community members and leaders propose an agreed number of candidates for post of facilitator.	Posts advertised via communities
	No. of interview sessions that include at least one local government representative on interview panel	All
	No. of interview sessions that include an LCMC member on interview panel.	One (Ntchisi) , but communities represented by other individuals.
8.2.All venues achieve minimum standards for quality	Clean drinking water available for learners at all LC venues	Not all
	Hand washing facilities available at all LC venues	Not all
	All venues are well maintained and provide sufficient shelter for learners	over 80%
	All venues are accessible to children with disabilities	over 80%

Government officers of the District Executive Committee, which advises local government, identified target areas for CBE learning centres within their districts, in consultation with traditional leaders and communities. In all cases, venues for learning centres were provided by the communities. Buildings were generally of reasonable condition, although not all venues had access to clean water and, in Chikwawa, only one learning centre had toilet facilities.

Chalkboards, exercise books and writing materials for learners were available in all learning centres. Several learning centres were yet to receive all required teaching and learning equipment, facilitators' materials, sports equipment and consumables. Distribution had been limited in Ntchisi, because of the late appointment of the supervisor. In most cases resources were being stored by

facilitators, or arrangements were made with local primary schools. Although almost all learning centres had Learner Registers in place, not all expected records were available at the time of the baseline. However, one learning centre had taken the initiative to keep a stock sheet, something that could be emulated in other centres.

8.2. Teaching and Learning

As well as assessing programme outputs and quality, benchmark data was collected with regard to teaching outcomes, learners' achievement, attitudes and livelihoods, and the current access to basic education in CBE target areas. The indicators for teaching outcomes are listed in Table 8.2 and show that, not surprisingly given that they had only just completed their initial training, facilitators will require continued in-service training to bring standards of teaching and learning to the required level.

Table 8.2. Indicators for teaching outcomes

Core indicator	Sub- indicator	Current status
6.1. 80% of facilitators are able to teach according to defined standards.	% of facilitators using interactive, learner-centred approach, in accordance with curriculum guidelines.	50% (mean score)
	% of facilitators using lesson notes to guide lesson delivery	55%
	% facilitators demonstrating support for non-attendees and special needs learners through remedial and enrichment activities.	23% (mean score)
	% facilitators demonstrating gender awareness.	69% (mean score)
	% of facilitators demonstrating imaginative and appropriate use of locally available resources.	29%
	% LCs where active participation of learners is demonstrated	12% (mean score)

In some aspects of teaching the facilitators scored well, particularly given that they were observed in the first few days of their teaching.. For example, the majority of facilitators circulated amongst learners during teaching and regularly gave praise, although less than 50% scored well in other aspects of a learner-centred pedagogy. Almost a third of facilitators made good use of locally-available resources for teaching, although this may require further emphasis during in-service training. Facilitators scored less well in the provision of support for learners of different abilities and less than half of facilitators scored well in lesson planning and progress, due, in particular to a lack of experience in timing of lessons. . Active participation of learners was limited: in less than 20% of observations did learners actually spend more time on activities than listening to the facilitators. In terms of gender awareness, facilitators scored high in ensuring that girls and boys got an equal share of class space and any tasks or questions, but were less sure how to encourage mutual respect between learners. Thus, key areas which need to be addressed in the forthcoming in-service training should include: ways to provide support for all learners in a mixed-ability class, encourage the active participation of learners in all activities and make use of locally available resources should also be addressed. Other pedagogical issues, like following lesson plans,

keeping to time and explaining the expected outcomes of the topics should also be included.

The administration of test items in literacy and numeracy to enrolled learners during the baseline survey has provided benchmark data for future assessment of learners' achievement. It is expected that by the end of the CBE pilot at least 50% of learners will be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills equivalent to the proposed entry point into formal primary schooling (Standard 6). As such, 50% of learners would be expected to answer correctly questions from Level 3 of those administered from the Learner Questionnaire. Currently, amongst all learners interviewed, 13% were able to answer questions for Level 3 in Chichewa, 2% in English and 9% in Numeracy.

In general, the majority of learners enrolled with CBE had basic pre-numeracy and pre-literacy skills. This was almost universal amongst older learners, but only just over half of non-attendees could demonstrate pre-literacy skills. Apart from greater pre-literacy skills amongst girls in Chikwawa, there was little differentiation by gender with regard to literacy. Less than 20% of non-attendees and younger learners had literacy skills in Chichewa equivalent to Standard 1. This underlines the need to pay particular attention to the learning needs of these groups. Few learners exhibited literacy skills in English, although a third of older learners were able to demonstrate some basic knowledge of English equivalent to Standard 1. Learners in all groups generally fared better with questions on numeracy, with just over half of all learners able to complete mathematical operations equivalent to Standard 1.

Learners with CBE are also expected acquire improved life skills and attitudes to promote positive behaviour. At least 50% of learners are expected to demonstrate this by the end of the pilot. Currently in terms of health, however, the majority of learners, except for girls in Lilongwe, were already aware of the importance of knowing one's HIV status prior to marriage and two-thirds of learners were aware that river water is an unsafe source of drinking water. More emphasis is needed, though, on developing attitudes that promote sustainable and productive use of the environment and agriculture, particularly amongst girls. In addition, most learners exhibited a lack of gender awareness, agreeing that boys are more intelligent than girls.

8.3. Impact and sustainability of CBE

Finally, in order to evaluate the wider impact of CBE on both learners and the surrounding communities, indicators were developed that will measure the uptake of learning and livelihood opportunities in the target areas. Table 8.3 summarises current baseline data for these indicators.

It is hoped that, in line with the purpose of CBE to allow out-of-school children and youth to acquire the essential knowledge, skills and values to promote self-reliance and encourage life long learning and the expectations of learners interviewed, that, on graduation, learners will be empowered to take up income-generating activities or opportunities for vocational training. It is also hoped that, learners will be encouraged to continue with their education, either through returning to formal schooling or other non-formal education opportunities. Perhaps, too, by providing role models, other out-of- school children will be encouraged to return to education.

Table 8.3. List of indicators for improved access to basic education and opportunities for improved livelihoods

Core indicator	Sub- indicator	Status
15.1. Improved uptake of basic education opportunities in CBE target areas.	% of children and youth (9-17 years) enrolled in formal schooling in CBE target areas.	71%
	% of children and youth (9-17 years) enrolled in CBE in CBE target areas	14%
	% of children and youth (9-17 years) enrolled in other non-formal basic education opportunities in CBE target areas.	0.5% (Chikwawa only)
17.1. Learners access opportunities for improved livelihoods.	% of learners using pre-vocational & business management skills to initiate IGA activities	18% run IGA
	% of learners accessing opportunities for vocational training	4%