



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 24-Sep-2020 | Report No: PIDC29717



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Malawi	Project ID P174329	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Malawi Education Reform Program (MERP) (P174329)
Region AFRICA EAST	Estimated Appraisal Date Dec 10, 2020	Estimated Board Date May 26, 2021	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Republic of Malawi	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

to strengthen learning environments in lower primary

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	48.70
Total Financing	48.70
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	48.70
EFA-FTI Education Program Development Fund	48.70

Environmental and Social Risk Classification
Moderate

Concept Review Decision
Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue



Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **The Republic of Malawi is a densely populated, landlocked country which is one of the poorest countries in the world.** Malawi is home to about 18 million people where 70 percent of the population lives below the poverty line of \$1.90 per day per capita. Incomes are substantially unequally distributed, with the poorest quintile of households accounting for only seven percent of income and the wealthiest quintile, fifty percent.¹ Nearly 85 percent of population lives in rural areas², with most locked in low productivity subsistence farming.

2. **The global COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted Malawi's trajectory for a third straight year of faster growth.** Real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita grew at an average of 1.5 percent per year in 1995–2018, while non-resource-rich Sub-Saharan African (SSA) economies grew at an average of close to 3 percent per year over the same period. Growth improved to an estimated 4.4 percent in 2019, up from 3.5 percent in 2018, reflecting improved agricultural production and resulting stronger performance in the industrial and service sectors. The economy was on a trajectory for its third consecutive year of faster growth in 2020 before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the overall duration and severity of the economic shock associated with the pandemic is uncertain at this time, it is likely to be significantly larger than anything seen since the financial crisis of 2008/09. The pandemic is also likely to exacerbate chronic high levels of poverty and inequality.

3. **Human capital outcomes are low.** Malawi ranks 172 out of 189 countries on the 2018 Human Development Index and 125 out of 157 countries on the Human Capital Index (HCI). According to the latest HCI, a child born in Malawi today will be 41 percent as productive when s/he grows up as s/he could be if s/he enjoyed complete education and full health. In terms of education, low rates of learning (see Sectoral and Institutional Context) mean that, while children in Malawi can expect to complete 9.4 years of pre- primary, primary and secondary school by age 18, when adjusted for quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 5.4 years.³ In terms of health, only 94 out of 100 children born in Malawi survive to age 5, and 37 out of 100 children are stunted, increasing their risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a lifetime. High rates of stunting persist as a result of high rates of poverty and a high incidence of early marriage (see next paragraph).

4. **Gender inequities are substantial.** Issues related to girls' and women's empowerment affect Malawi's human capital development with high fertility rates, particularly among rural women and those in the lowest-income quintile of households (6.1 persons per household, versus 4.5 in the least poor quintile).⁴ Early marriage is common, with 46 percent of women aged 18-22 reporting having been married before their 18th birthday, and nearly one-third of women aged 15-19 having already begun childbearing.⁵ The Malawian population is very young and growing fast, posing significant

¹ Integrated Household Survey (IHS) 2016/17.

² World Bank estimate based on United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects. 2018. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=MW>. Accessed: 9th June 2020.

³ World Bank. 2018. "Malawi". Available at: https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/hci/HCI_2pager_MWI.pdf. Accessed: 10th June 2020.

⁴ IHS 2016/17

⁵ Multiple Indicator Cluster (MICS) 2017 survey.



pressures on education service delivery, with the expansion in schooling system unable to catch up with the demand. The mean age is 17 years, with 75 percent of Malawians under the age of 35 years. The large, fast growing young population, with 1.3 million children entering the school system every year, places tremendous pressure on limited resources available for education service delivery. The number of school-age population at primary level is expected to increase from 4.8 million to 6.5 million by 2030⁶.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. **Education is a key national priority area for Malawi.** Education and Skills Development are among the nine Key Priority Areas (KPA) within the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, 2017-2022. The Government's National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2008-2017, and related Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP-II) 2013-2018, is supported by the current Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant (ESPIG) of US\$ 44.9 million from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the resulting project, the Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project (MESIP, P158145). Following a two-year transition period between sector plans, the Ministry of Science, Education and Technology (MoEST) is finalizing the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP) 2020-2030; this will translate into a five-year costed implementation plan, the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) III (2020-2025), currently under development. The proposed project will support NESIP and ESIP-III, in particular the strategic objectives for primary education: improved equitable, inclusive access and participation; improved quality and relevance of teaching and learning; and efficient governance, management and accountability of service delivery.

6. **MESIP has put the primary education sub-sector on the right footing.** Provision of additional grants going directly to schools supported the construction of more than 1000 low cost learning shelters and classrooms, constructed by communities, and appointment of more than 500 auxiliary teachers. Headteachers and deputy headteachers from 800 schools across Malawi have received School Leadership Program training to better manage schools in resource-constrained environments, maintain school records, create inclusive school cultures, and improve teacher performance. MoEST has prepared a new primary Teacher Management Strategy updating and clarifying policies relating to teacher management and made substantial improvements in the targeting of newly allocated teachers to schools.

7. **However, these achievements have not significantly improved national outcomes owing to a narrow focus on a subset of schools.** Each MESIP intervention is targeted to around 15 percent of public primary schools. In most cases, the targeted schools are all within eight disadvantaged districts.⁷ The MESIP interventions have achieved improvements in learning environments and practices at these schools, and it is anticipated that forthcoming impact evaluations will confirm long-term impacts on education outcomes. However, the national picture in terms of key performance indicators has not significantly improved. Chronic high rates of repetition and dropout, and low levels of learning, have persisted, as have large inequities in conditions and learning between schools. Moving the needle on national outcomes necessitates a transition from a project to a programmatic approach.

8. **Malawi's primary education system has achieved remarkable progress in increasing access to school but faces continued pressure on the system to provide quality learning in the face of growing intake of students.** Only 61 percent of students entering Standard 1 survive to Standard 5, and this rate has declined in the last five years.⁸ Malawi's primary schools are an extreme case of 'traffic-jam' problem, with extremely large class sizes and low learning in Standards 1 and 2. High fertility rates have driven a rapid rate of enrollment expansion in recent years. Without adequate supply of

⁶ 6-13 year olds. We use population projections from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, adjusted to reflect school-age share of population as reported in the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

⁷ An additional 10 percent of schools, and an additional four districts, are targeted by the MESIP-Extended program supported by Royal Norwegian Embassy.

⁸ MoEST. 2019. *Malawi Education Statistics 2017/18*.



classrooms and teachers, this results in extremely large class sizes, typically above 100 students in Standards 1-2. In these poor conditions, rates of learning are low, leading to high rates of repetition and subsequently even larger class sizes. As a result, students finish lower primary with minimal learning: only one-third of Standard 4 students can add simple two- and three-digit numbers. These large class sizes are a result of severe shortages in classrooms and teachers in lower grades. The typical school has 326 students in Standards 1-2 and only two classrooms available for classes in these standards.⁹ More than a quarter of schools employ at least one open-air classroom, and these are predominantly used in lower primary.

9. **These overall challenges are exacerbated by large inequities between schools.** Pupil-teacher ratios and learning environments vary widely, with disadvantaged schools – mostly in remote areas – facing severe shortages of teachers and infrastructure in poor condition while other schools have excess staff and relatively good conditions. These inequities are predictive of disparities in learning outcomes. To raise overall levels of learning, there is an urgent need to ‘raise the floor’ by targeting resources to close the gap between the most disadvantaged schools and the rest.

10. **These poor outcomes persist as a result of longstanding bottlenecks in education system management capacity.** Weaknesses in the teacher management system prevent district officials from allocating and enforcing allocation of teachers to remote schools; weaknesses in school management, and sub-district school supervision lead to persistent inequitable allocations of teachers to lower grades; and weakness in central level procurement of construction lead to high-cost and low-speed construction of classrooms.

11. **The MESIP interventions have presented effective approaches to address these issues, but on a limited scale.** Provision of additional grants to schools (‘MESIP SIG’), paid directly to schools in a timely manner as a top-up to regular PSIG, supported the construction of more than 1000 low cost learning shelters and classrooms, procured and constructed by communities at an average cost of \$2,500, less than 1/7 the cost of conventional central procurement. These schools have additionally appointed more than 500 ‘auxiliary’ teachers, paid for from the MESIP SIG, predominantly teachers who have completed teacher training but are waiting for their full deployment to schools. The School Leadership Program; guidance and supervision from Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) on use of MESIP SIG; and disbursement-linked indicator (DLI) providing incentives to MoEST to achieve reductions in PTRs in lower primary in eight disadvantaged districts; have collectively supported improvements in the allocation of teachers to lower grades. However, these gains are limited to the schools supported by MESIP SIG and participating in the School Leadership Program, and to the eight districts subject to the DLI.

12. MESIP SIG may have been more effective with a more needs-based approach. Analysis by the World Bank Task Team of the pilot implementation under MESIP, which employed a similar needs-based component as PSIP, suggests that only around one in ten participating schools were able to construct adequate shelters or appoint sufficient auxiliary teachers to reduce pupil-classroom ratios (PCRs) and pupil-teacher ratios (PTRs) in grades 1-2 to reasonable levels. Around 80 percent of schools were only partially able to meet their needs for shelters and teachers with the funds available, while 12 percent of schools already had reasonable conditions in these grades and invested their grant finance in other areas. A more targeted approach, with a larger needs-based component, would have enabled a greater share of schools to reduce PTR and PCR in these grades to reasonable levels.

13. **Girls achieve lower learning outcomes than boys and are less likely to complete primary school.** Malawi has largely achieved gender parity in primary school intake: the gross intake ratio for girls is slightly higher than that for boys, 124 percent versus 122 percent in 2017/18, according to the Education Management Information System (EMIS), and girls repeat and drop out at similar rates to boys. However, girls achieve lower learning outcomes at all stages of primary

⁹ Malawi Longitudinal Schools Survey (MLSS), midline data (2018/19)



school. In the MLSS learning assessments, conducted with Standard 4 students, girls achieve average scores twenty points below boys on standardized knowledge scale, equivalent to several months' less learning.¹⁰ These disparities persist in upper primary: by Standard 6, girls achieve scores ten percentage points lower in SACMEQ Maths and seven percentage points lower in reading¹¹, and by Standard 8, only 72 percent girls pass the PSLCE versus 82 percent of boys. The result of these diverging learning trajectories is that the primary completion rate for girls is significantly lower than for boys.

14. **Concerted efforts to support girls in upper primary have successfully reduced the gap in completion rates in recent years, but further progress requires attention to divergent learning in lower primary.** MESIP, and other projects such as the Strengthening Malawi's Education System project supported by DFID, have provided support to retention and attendance of girls in upper primary through methods including appointment of girls' counselors and mentors; provision of menstrual health management (MHM) materials; and monitoring and support to vulnerable girls and those at risk of dropout. These interventions have succeeded in reducing the gap in primary completion over the last five years (Figure 7), although the gap has also reduced as a result of declining completion by boys. However, the persistence of significant learning disparities in Standard 4 suggests that the seeds of differential primary completion are sown in lower primary. Attention to girls' learning in lower primary, to close the learning gap with boys, is likely to be necessary to fully eliminate the gap in primary completion.

Other contextual factors of relevance to the proposed project include:

15. **Context of decentralization.** The framework for education management in Malawi has shifted since the onset of MESIP as a result of the ongoing agenda of decentralization in Malawi. Management of teacher payrolls, which was previously conducted at central level by the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD), has been decentralized to district level since 2016/17. The Local Government Accountability and Performance (LGAP) project, implemented by USAID and DfID, provides support to districts to conduct a range of activities including school leadership training and inspection. The World Bank's Governance for Effective Service Delivery (GESD) programme, which was approved by the World Bank Board on April 30 2020, will support performance-based financing for districts, including for education, which will increase district-level resources while strengthening fiscal and service delivery management at local level, laying the groundwork for deeper decentralization of education finance to districts and schools over time.

16. **Other WB support to sector.** The proposed project is aligned with and complementary to World Bank support to other levels of the education, most notably Equity with Quality and Learning at Secondary (EQUALS, P164223) and Skills for a Vibrant Economy (SAVE, P172627). In particular, the support to teacher management in the proposed project is well aligned with EQUALS, which supports improvements in supply and allocation of teachers at secondary level, with an emphasis on female teachers. In addition, the proposed project builds upon activities supported by the Investing in Early Years for Productivity Project (IEYPP, P164771), notably the provision of distance learning materials via community radio; and the aforementioned GESD.

17. **Coordination with DPs working on education.** The proposed project builds upon and is complementary to the various ongoing DP-supported projects and activities in the sector. In particular, the project builds upon the work of the National Reading Programme, supported by USAID and DfID, which strengthens literacy education in lower primary and is currently being expanded to upper primary; and Strengthening Malawi's Education System (SMES), supported by DfID, which aims to achieve gender equality in education via provision of financial and material support to female students, strengthening of communities, and mentoring. The proposed project also complements ongoing support to strengthening of EMIS by UNICEF and USAID, among others; The MLSS, which is financed by RNE and DFID, provides evidence to inform

¹⁰ MLSS baseline, 2016. Initial analysis suggests continued gender disparities at midline (2018/19)

¹¹ SACMEQ IV, 2013. <http://www.sacmeq.org/?q=sacmeq-members/malawi/sacmeq-indicators>



the project design and has laid the groundwork for a joint framework between DPs and Government to address issues of data quality and evidence-based policymaking.

Relationship to CPF

18. **The proposed operation is aligned to the most recent Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) (FY 2013-17).** The proposed operation is directly aligned to Theme 2 ‘enhancing human capital and reducing vulnerabilities’. The specific results areas to which the project will directly contribute are: Results area 2.1, ‘improved delivery of public services’; Outcome 2.1: (*Improved access to quality education*). Arising from the socio-economic benefits of secondary education highlighted above, the project has a linkage to results area 2.2: ‘lowering vulnerability and enhancing resilience’; as well as Theme 1: ‘promoting sustainable, diversified and inclusive growth’, results area 1.3 ‘strengthening productivity in a diversified economy’. Although the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) is in draft, the project is well aligned with the third focus area for the new CPF, ‘building human capital and resilience’.

19. **The proposed project is also aligned to the 3rd Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III, 2017-22) which will provide anchorage for the next CPF.** Education and skills development is one of the five key priority areas in the 3rd Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III) with an overall goal to ‘*improve quality and relevant education and skills for all*’. The specific outcomes of the MGDS to which the proposed project is aligned are: (a) increased quality and relevance of primary education; (b) improved access and equity in basic education; and (c) improved governance and management of basic education. Further, the project will also contribute to Malawi’s progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on education over the upcoming CPF cycles. This is specific reference to Goal 4: ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’.

20. **The proposed project will contribute to the World Bank’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity, and is consistent with the World Bank Group’s Human Capital Project and Africa Human Capital Plan.** Global evidence shows that countries that experience high and sustainable economic growth have large supply of post-primary education personnel. Investments in secondary education would enable Malawi to harness its population dividend through the high returns that accrue to secondary education; as well as contribute to the demographic transformation arising from the social returns to secondary education. The proposed project is thus in line with the World Bank Group’s Human Capital project, which is an accelerated effort to encourage investment in people; and the Africa Human Capital Plan, which has as one of its objectives ensuring that all girls and boys attain real learning in the classroom. In addition, the project’s focus on improving learning environments in lower primary is well aligned with the World Bank’s target to reduce learning poverty at age 10 by at least half by 2030.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

21. The proposed Project Development Objective is to *strengthen learning environments in lower primary*.

Key Results (From PCN)

PDO Level Results Indicators

1. Pupil-classroom ratios (PCRs) in lower primary [Number], by grade, average and interquartile range¹²

¹² Interquartile range is measured to capture improvements in equity between schools.



2. Pupil-qualified teacher ratios (PQTRs) in lower primary [Number], by grade, average and interquartile range
3. Student dropout rate in lower primary [Percent], disaggregated by grade and gender

22. **PBCs are tentatively as follows:**

1. Recipient has met the annual target for the share of schools receiving Primary School Improvement Grants by October 31 in accordance with the PSIG formula [Percent]
2. Recipient has met the annual target for the share of schools with pupil-teacher ratios in Standards 1-2 in the acceptable range [Percent]
3. Local Government Authorities have met the annual target for the completion of activities to improve distribution of female teachers [Percent]

23. All PBCs will be Intermediate Results Indicators. Additional Intermediate Results Indicators will be identified during project preparation.

24. **Project beneficiaries.** The project is expected to invest in all public primary schools in Malawi, with benefits for around five million students¹³. In particular, the project is expected to benefit female students (2.6 million)¹⁴.

D. Concept Description

25. The project supports a combination of targeted investments at Standard 1 and 2 levels, and provides incentives to districts and direct support to schools to address the constraints which prevent schools from providing quality education. Key elements include:

- **Improved learning environments in lower primary:** supporting expansion and reform of the PSIG program to provide more support to districts, zones and schools, particularly those facing severe disadvantages in staffing and learning conditions in lower grades;
- **Supporting girls' learning:** providing training to headteachers, deputy headteachers, selected female teachers, zone-level PEAs, and inspectors to (1) create a positive and inclusive culture towards vulnerable children including girls and over-age students; (2) support female teacher retention and overall performance of teachers in schools; (3) Improve the efficiency and equity of school resource utilization and (4) maintain and utilize academic records to support low-performing students, and capacitation of communities to support female students;
- **Policy reform for improved efficiency, equity and learning (Variable part),** to provide incentives for system-level reform of policy and resource allocation, with performance-based conditions (PBCs) as described under Key Results.

26. There are four components: two fixed components supporting project activities; a variable part; and a component for project coordination.

Component 1. Improved learning environments in lower primary (US\$15 million [indicative])

¹³ 5,063,917 public primary students as of 2017/18 (*MoEST Education Statistics 2017/18*).

¹⁴ 2,559,560 female public primary students as of 2017/18 (*MoEST Education Statistics 2017/18*).



27. PSIG are the primary source of discretionary finance to schools, and of vital importance for the long-term capacity of schools to ensure safe and effective learning environments. This component will support the expansion and reform of PSIG to provide additional and more needs-based discretionary finance to schools to support investment in reduced class sizes and improved learning environments. Following the successful implementation of MESIP SIG, MoEST is currently updating the PSIG guidelines to incorporate the strategies piloted under MESIP for improvement of retention and promotion and reduction in girls' dropout, including construction of low-cost learning shelters; hiring of auxiliary teachers; and provision of MHM materials and gender-specific infrastructure, notably girls' changing rooms; awards for most rapidly improved students; inviting female role models to schools; and monitoring and counselling girls at risk of dropout.

28. However, the current PSIG per-school allocations are insufficient to enable schools to fully implement these strategies. In addition, the current formula is inadequately linked to needs and school size. Projections by the Task Team suggest that an approach where grants (a) are scaled according to enrollment, not on a per-school basis; and (b) contain a substantial adjustable needs-based component, could substantially reduce disparities between schools over the lifetime of the project (Table 1). This component will provide additional finance to expand the standard per-school allocation of SIG; expand the enrollment-related component to provide more equitable per-student funding; and provide additional targeted support to districts, zones and schools facing severe challenges of infrastructure and staffing.

29. The component supports Strategic Objective 2 of NESIP, to *Improve quality and relevance of teaching and learning in primary education*. Specifically, the PBC supports Priority Action vi under this objective, to *increase the direct funding to schools and make it needs-based*.

Component 2. Supporting girls' learning (US\$9.1 million [indicative])

30. This component will support the national delivery of an updated and revised School Leadership Program (SLP) supporting headteachers and deputy headteachers to (1) create a positive and inclusive culture towards over-age children and girls; (2) Improve teacher's motivation and morale and reward performance; and (3) Improve the efficiency and equity of school resource utilization and (4) maintain and utilize academic records to support low-performing students. The Program will adapt and update the School Leadership Program supported by MESIP, with a greater emphasis on building school cultures which meet the needs of girls, overage students, and low-performing students.

31. Only around 12 percent of Malawi's headteachers are female¹⁵. The lack of female teachers in senior leadership positions poses a threat to efforts to build inclusive school cultures, to improve the distribution of female teachers, and to provide role models for female learners. The project will explore innovative approaches to build the management skills of female teachers and develop a cohort of potential future school leaders. As part of this, it is likely that the revised SLP will include female teacher in junior leadership positions, such as section heads, with a particular emphasis on schools where neither the headteacher nor deputy headteacher is female.

32. Supervision by meso-level officials has positive impacts on the quality of school leadership and resulting learning outcomes.¹⁶ The original SLP under MESIP included PEAs in the training to enable them to monitor and support headteachers in the implementation of the strategies and behaviors inculcated by the program. Following feedback from follow-up visits in participating schools, and noting the expansion of the school inspection program supported by LGAP, it

¹⁵ MLSS midline, 2018/19

¹⁶ Ehren, M., Eddy-Spicer, D., Bangpan, M. & Reid, A. 2017. "School inspections in low- and middle-income countries: Explaining impact and mechanisms of impact." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 47:4, 468-482



is anticipated that the expanded training will also include school inspectors to ensure alignment between officials providing subdistrict supervision. These officials will then provide follow-up supervision support to schools.

33. Project preparation will explore the potential for this component to additionally support capacity building of communities to support girls' learning, through monitoring of girls' attendance, MHM support, psychosocial support, and support to caregivers of female students.

34. The component supports Strategic Objective 2 of NESIP for Inclusive Education and Gender, *Improved quality of service provision in IE, Gender and other crosscutting issues*; and Strategic Objective 3 under the same area, *Improved governance and management of Inclusive Education, Gender and other cross cutting issues*.

Component 3. Policy reform for improved efficiency, equity and learning (Variable part/performance-based conditions) (US\$21.6 million [indicative])

35. This component will support PBCs in three areas, providing incentives and resources to support medium-term reforms to ensure the long-term functioning of the education system.

PBC 1. Recipient has met the annual target for the share of schools receiving modified School Improvement Grants by October 31 in accordance with the new formula (Percent; US\$ 7.2 million [indicative])

36. PSIG is subject to delays and discrepancies in delivery which pose severe limitations in its usefulness for schools. Under MESIP, payment of MESIP SIG direct to schools from central Government enabled timely and correct payments, a key driver of the successful utilization of the funds by schools. To complement the support provided to the mainstreaming of MESIP SIG into PSIG and reformed formula, this PBC will support reforms to the funds flow of PSIG and incentivize timely payments to schools in accordance with the new formula.

The PBC supports Strategic Objective 2 of NESIP, to *Improve quality and relevance of teaching and learning in primary education*. Specifically, the PBC supports Priority Action vi under this objective, to *increase the direct funding to schools and make it needs-based*.

PBC 2. Recipient has met the annual target for the share of schools with pupil-qualified teacher ratios in Standards 1-2 in the acceptable range (Percent; US\$ 7.2 million [indicative])

37. Misallocations of teachers – between schools and, within schools, between grades – represent the single largest misallocation of resources in the Malawi education sector. Teacher salaries account for around 70 percent of public primary expenditure, but an estimated 7 percent per year is used inefficiently to finance comparatively excessive staffing in certain schools with PTRs well below 60, predominantly in towns and trading centers. Headteachers in these schools report that excess teachers reduce overall levels of discipline and school functioning, while headteachers in chronically understaffed schools in the same zone face severe constraints.¹⁷ Recent reforms supported by MESIP have improved the allocation of newly deployed teachers to schools, as described above; however, a large share of schools still face PTRs

¹⁷ Asim, S., Chimombo, J., Chugunov, D. and Gera, R. 2020. "Moving teachers to Malawi's remote communities: A data-driven approach to teacher deployment."



above 100. Improved allocations, while necessary, may be insufficient to address the disparities in PTRs in the medium term and bring PTRs at overstuffed to a reasonable level.

38. In addition, even with action to improve allocations of teachers to schools, there is a need to address poor allocations of teachers within schools to grades. PTRs in lower primary are exacerbated by under-allocation of teachers to these grades. In order to achieve reduction in class sizes, and complementary to the support provided to addressal of classroom shortages in these grades by Component 1, it is necessary to increase the equity of school-level teacher allocations. Therefore, this PBC provides incentives for increases in the share of schools with PTRs in Standards 1-2 within the acceptable range, rewarding improvement in both inter- and intra-school allocations.

39. The PBC supports Strategic Objective 3 of NESIP for primary education, *Efficient governance, management and accountability of primary education service delivery*. Specifically, the PBC supports Priority Action iii under this objective, to *Rationalize teacher deployment to achieve minimum pupil teacher ratio at every school*. As teacher misallocations represent one of the largest misallocations of resources in the Malawian school system, the PBC is expected to increase system efficiency through reduced misallocation. However, this is additionally expected to have benefits for equity by reducing the disparities in staffing between schools, and within schools, between grades. Furthermore, as evidence suggests that reduction in class sizes is a prerequisite for improving learning in lower primary, the PBC is also expected to have impacts on quality.

PBC 3. Local Government Authorities have met the annual target for the completion of activities to improve distribution of female teachers (Percent; US\$ 7.2 million [indicative])

40. Female teachers are particularly poorly distributed between schools as described above. A number of obstacles present challenges in ensuring adequate numbers of female teachers in remote areas: availability of housing; concerns of safety during transportation to schools; and access to healthcare and childcare. District councils and DEOs have a mandate to address these challenges through a number of means, including construction of housing for female teachers at schools in remote areas; support to transport for female teachers to schools in remote areas. These activities are among the district mandated activities supported through results-based financing from GESD, but without a specific results-based focus on gender in an education context. This PBC provides direct incentives to districts to districts to conduct activities to improve the distribution of female teachers.

41. The PBC supports Strategic Objective 3 of NESIP for primary education, *Efficient governance, management and accountability of primary education service delivery*. Specifically, the PBC supports Priority Action iii under this objective, to *Rationalize teacher deployment to achieve minimum pupil teacher ratio at every school*. By focusing on the distribution of female teachers in particular, the PBC is expected to improve the equity of the primary school system by providing adequate access to female teachers for female students, particularly in remote areas. This supports Strategic Objective 2 of NESIP for Inclusive Education and Gender, *Improved quality of service provision in IE, Gender and other crosscutting issues*.

Component 4. Project Management, and Sector Program Support and Coordination (US\$3 million).

42. This component will finance the management of the project, including reporting. The component will support the establishment of a small Program Facilitation Team (PFT), consisting of a coordinator and specialists in financial



management, procurement, M&E, and gender. Specialists for environmental and social safeguards will be appointed if deemed required as part of safeguards capacity assessments.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Detailed project location(s) and salient physical characteristics relevant to the E&S Assessment (geographic, environmental, social)

43. The project will support national implementation of a focused, coordinated sector-wide approach providing a minimum package of support for all schools, with smart, data-driven targeting, top-up resources for needy schools commensurate with the specific challenges faced. The main environmental and social risks within the proposed project are associated with financing the construction of low cost learning shelters within Component 1. Enhanced School Finance for Improved Retention and Learning in Lower Primary. While resources are not tied directly to construction of shelters, schools can choose to use the School improvement Grants (SIG) for construction of learning shelters. It can therefore be assumed that that project will fund a subset of shelters that the school might choose to construct using the School improvement Grants. In that regard, all constructions that will be built by schools funded in this operation will conform to the World Bank ESF. These low cost learning shelters will help overcome Malawi’s chronic shortage of school classrooms and attendant overcrowding by increasing the long-term capacity of schools to ensure safe and effective learning environments. The civil works are expected to be of small scale educational infrastructure new constructions and/or rehabilitation/improvement of existing structures. Works are expected to consist of learning shelters with single or twin learning rooms with potentially one or more blocks to be constructed or rehabilitated within a school. Also included in the component is the construction of gender-specific infrastructure within the schools, notably girls’ changing rooms which are expected to be similarly small-scale and infrastructure will be designed to ensure universal access taking into account of accessibility for people and learners with disabilities, whose prevalence stands at 3% among children, according to the 2018 census. Component 4 Reform for Effective Schooling and Equitable Learning (Variable part/performance-based conditions); Performance-Based Condition (PBC 3 Local Government Authorities have met the annual target for the completion of activities to improve distribution of female teachers - also includes provision for the construction of housing for female teachers at schools in remote areas. All of the civil works are expected to be within or adjacent to existing educational campuses/facilities and be of a scale where risks and impacts are not anticipated to be significant, long term, complex or diverse. The construction/rehabilitation will entail construction works that may result in the creation of solid waste, noise/air pollution and minor congestion due to the use of vehicles and machinery. Additionally occupational health and safety risks and community safety impacts including GBV/SEA/SH that may result from learners interaction with external workers and school personnel are to be expected. The civil works are therefore not anticipated to result in the loss of or impact on high conservation value habitats. Where school campuses are too small to accommodate additional learning shelters it would be necessary to acquire adjacent land. Being in existing urban settings these areas are not expected to pose any additional environmental risk. However should existing school campuses be too small to accommodate additional structures it would be necessary for land to be acquired. Potential environmental and social risks or impacts of conducting the TA under component 2 and 4 are expected to be negligible and will not result in significant



potential adverse risks. As the exact locations of project investments are not yet determined, an ESMF will be prepared to ensure that a process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating environmental and social impacts is integrated in the development of the specific subprojects. As the requirements for additional land outside of existing school campuses becomes clear, the requirement to prepare RPF will be determined.

Borrower's Institutional Capacity

44. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) will be the main implementing agency on behalf of the Government of Malawi; under the overall leadership and coordination of the Directorate of Planning and Directorate of Basic Education. Line agencies and institutions that will be involved include the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) and Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). In addition, the 34 Education Districts will play a key role in day-to-day implementation and achievement of results. The Government and the Ministry in particular already has considerable experience and developed PIUs which have managed similar school-construction related risks and impacts within Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project (MESIP, P158145), Equity with Quality and Learning at Secondary (EQUALS, P164223) and Investing in Early Years for Productivity Project (IEYP P164771). These projects have built increasingly competent capacity for preparing and implementing safeguards instruments and monitoring safeguards compliance of construction contractors. The PIUs have not implemented any project that applies the ESF. However, the safeguards specialists have been trained on the ESF and further capacity building will be outlined in the ESCP.

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Salman Asim
Senior Economist

Borrower/Client/Recipient

Republic of Malawi
Clifford Chiunda
Secretary to the Treasury
finance@finance.gov.mw

Implementing Agencies



Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Rodwell Mzonde
Director of Education Planning
rsmzonde@gmail.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Salman Asim
----------------------	-------------

Approved By

Country Director:	Hugh Riddell	29-Sep-2020
-------------------	--------------	-------------