



**THE DEVELOPMENT AND STATE OF ADULT  
LEARNING AND EDUCATION (ALE)**

**A NATIONAL REPORT OF MALAWI**

**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

*April, 2008*

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This National Report is a product of the efforts and commitment of several individuals and Governmental and Non Governmental Organisation representatives at the national and district levels. The collection of data for the report was facilitated by District Community Development Officers in all the 28 districts of the country, whereas the compilation of the actual report was undertaken by a Team of individuals drawn from government and the civil society, whose details are listed in the appendix. Government of Malawi is indebted to this Team. They gave freely their time and resources to make this exercise a success. Their dedication and cooperation throughout the series of preparatory meetings is highly appreciated.

The compilation of the report was highly consultative and participatory such that it demanded several logistical arrangements. In this regard, the Government of Malawi is also indebted to Action Aid International Malawi for providing financial support throughout the exercise. Furthermore, thanks go UNDP, through the Functional Literacy for Integrated Rural Development programme (FLIRD) for their technical assistance in the production of the report.

Special appreciation is also extended to the support staff at the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) for providing various forms of support throughout the preparatory stages of the report writing.

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAIM	Action Aid International Malawi
ADB	African Development Bank
ADC	Area Development Committee
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
ASUM	Association of Sunni Madrassa
BLM	Banja La Mtsogolo
CBE	Complimentary Basic Education
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CDA	Community Development Assistant
COMSIP	Community Savings and Investment Promotion
CONFINTEA	International Conference on Adult Education
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition on Quality Basic Education
CU	Concern Universal
DA	District Assembly
DC	District Commissioner
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DEMATT	Development of Malawi Traders Trust
EFA	Education For All
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FLIRD	Functional Literacy for Integrated Rural Development
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Gross National Product
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCE	Junior Certificate Education
LBP	Lake Basin Project
LEG	Link for Educational Governance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAREFO	Malawi REFLECT Forum
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MEDI	Malawi Entrepreneurship Development Institute
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MOWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
MOYSD	Ministry of Youth and Sports Development
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MRFC	Malawi Rural Finance Corporation

MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MUSCCO	Malawi Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives
NAFIM	Non formal and Forma Educational Initiatives in Malawi
NALP	National Adult Literacy Programme
NASFAM	National Smallholder Farmer Association of Malawi
NCLAE	National Centre for Literacy and Education
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NLS	National Library Services
NSO	National Statistics Office
PLWA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RIC	Rural Information Centre
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SCC	Swedish Cooperative Centre
SDIG	Skills Development and Income Generation
SEDOM	Small Entrepreneurship Development of Malawi
SSEEP	Sustainable Social Economic Empowerment for Poverty Reduction
STAR	Societies Tackling AIDS through Rights
TEVETA	Technical Education and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade
VDC	Village Development Committee
WRHS	Work for Rural Health Services



**MAP OF MALAWI**

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

Malawi is a small, beautiful and landlocked country in southern Africa bordering with Tanzania on the north, Zambia on the west and Mozambique on the east and south. With a population of close to 12 million people against a land holding size of 120,000 sq km, Malawi has a population density of 90,000 people per square km, making it one of Africa's smallest but most densely populated countries. Of these, 51% are female and 49% are male (GOM, 1998). Landlocked Malawi ranks among the world's least developed countries with a GNP per capita estimated at US\$200 and the real growth in GNP per capita of 0.5% in 2008.

Agriculture accounts for 40% of the GDP and 88% of export revenue. According to the Integrated Household Survey of 1998, poverty incidence was significantly higher among households headed by females (62.2%) as compared to those headed by males (54.5%). Illiteracy in Malawi remains high, most particularly among women and the poor. In the 1998 population census, only 58% of all adults (15 years and older) were literate. When this is disaggregated in terms of gender, the literacy rates for male adults and female adults are 64% and 51% respectively (NSO, 2000).

In 1994, Malawi went through a political transition from a one party dictatorship to a multiparty system of government. Good economic progress has been made in the post 1994 years, particularly in the past three years. Fiscal deficits have been falling and by 2007 inflation had fallen to below 8%. Growth in GDP averaged over 6% in the period between 2004 and 2007.

In order to combat poverty and spur economic growth, Government has adopted poverty reduction and economic growth as its operative development philosophy which has consistently underpinned the major development policy frameworks since May 1994. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) which superseded the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP) since the beginning of 2007 champions

concerted efforts in various areas such as sustainable economic growth, social protection and disaster management, social development and good governance as a platform for mitigating and ultimately combating poverty and promoting growth in the country. The inspiration of the MGDS is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets which aim to halve people living in poverty by 2015. To achieve these targets, literacy is very much acknowledged as the major driving force. In this regard, government has been creating a conducive atmosphere for the operationalisation of adult literacy programme by other players, predominantly, the civil society so much so that the REFLECT approach is among the alternative approaches increasingly adopted and practiced in the country. Furthermore, government is championing the development of a National Adult Literacy Policy to give coherence in the delivery of adult literacy. It is envisaged that the National Adult Literacy Policy will be launched in 2008.

## **CHAPTER 1: POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FINANCING**

### ***1.1 Legislative and Policy Frameworks of Adult Literacy***

The National Adult Literacy Programme operates within the framework of Malawi's 1962 Education Act. Furthermore, promotion of literacy education is regarded as a concern of all key development agencies, government as well as Non-Governmental Organizations.

The Education Act stipulates that all persons are entitled to education. However since issues of adult literacy do not come out clearly in the Act, Government, through the UNDP funded Sustainable Social Economic Empowerment Programme (SSEEP), embarked on the development of the National Adult Literacy Policy in 2006. The overall goal of the policy is to guide programme planners and decision makers to put in place a comprehensive set of programme and services so as to increase levels of literacy by 85% by the year 2011. Specifically the policy aims at:

- Promoting greater awareness of understanding of adult literacy issues particularly in the context of the overall scheme of national development priorities and concerns.
- Ensuring that strategies on adult literacy are put in place and are responsive to the Socio-economic needs of communities.
- Promoting strategic linkages and coordination among literacy providers and related services from both public and the non-state sector.
- Ensuring well funded comprehensive and broadly accessible services at all levels of literacy with multiple points of entry and mechanisms for smooth transitions between components.
- Promoting the adoption of accepted and recognized standards of programme quality for adult literacy interventions.

### *1.1.1 Priority goals for Adult Literacy*

The linkage between literacy and development has resulted in the placement of adult literacy on top of poverty reduction in Malawi. Empirical evidence demonstrates that high literacy levels correlate positively with low poverty levels (cf, Herbert, 2004). Statistics show that nearly two thirds of all households headed by illiterate parents in Malawi are poor (NSO, 2005).

The importance of adult literacy in national development is also recognized in the country's major development policies and frameworks like the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP), which preceded the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) which stipulates that illiterate people are most likely to be the poorest. Thus Malawi as a country therefore has put adult literacy as a priority by setting the following objectives:

- Making approximately 5 million adult illiterates functionally literate.
- Eradicating illiteracy by mounting countrywide mass literacy campaigns.
- Increasing the attainment and use of literacy skills by mounting organized programmes of literacy and post literacy activities with the view of sustaining the process of learning and life long continuing education for adults.

### *1.1.2 Organization of the adult literacy programme*

Malawi adopted a decentralization policy in 1998. This saw the Ministry of Women and Child Development, under which the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) falls, devolve some of its core functions to the District Assemblies. The set up therefore implies that various functions of the NALP Secretariat are now being performed at National and District level.

### *At National level*

The National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) which is the NALP Secretariat and is headed by the National Coordinator who reports to the Director of Community Development performs the following functions:

- Curriculum development and review
- Policy formulation
- Setting standards for a sound literacy programme
- Development, printing and distribution of teaching and learning materials, post literacy materials, documentation and information services
- Supervisory support to ensure that set standards are abided by to avoid compromising quality
- Monitoring evaluation and research
- Orientation and training of personnel especially at supervisory level
- Processing of instructors' honoraria

In addition to the above functions NCLAE is also responsible for seeking collaboration with various specialized agencies both government and non-government organizations as well as faith based organizations. These include among others Action Aid International Malawi, World Vision International, OXFAM, City Assemblies(Lilongwe) and faith based organisations such as Nkhoma Synod of CCAP, Lutheran Development Service and Association of Sunni Madrassa (ASUM) just to mention a few.

### *At District level*

The District Community Development Officer who reports directly to the District Commissioner through Director of Planning and Development takes charge of all adult literacy programmes. Under his/her charge are Community Development Assistants (CDAs) who assume the responsibility of literacy supervision.

The Community Development Assistant is a permanent government employee trained in community development work which includes literacy. She/he has practical knowledge

in the organization and management of literacy work. Apart from overseeing the activities of supervisors the District Community Development Officer also facilitates the participation of other development agencies from sectors/ministries such as Education, Health, Agriculture, Local Government and Rural Development in literacy education and other related development efforts.

### *At grassroots' level*

At the grass root level, the NALP services are implemented by locally based volunteer instructors/facilitators identified and selected by communities through literacy committees. These Committees are responsible for the day to day running of adult literacy classes at village level. In summary, it therefore implies that with decentralization the district Assembly now performs the following functions:

- Conducting awareness/campaign meetings with community leaders
- Recruiting and training adult literacy instructors
- Paying instructors' honoraria
- Organizing and training new literacy committees
- Conducting refresher courses for instructors and literacy committees
- Supervising adult literacy instructors/facilitators
- Conducting learner assessment at the end of a 10 month learning cycle
- Organizing certificate presentation ceremonies

### *1.1.3 Policy and implementation strategy link with other relevant policies*

The Adult Literacy Policy is practically linked to almost every other government policy since literacy enables people to function properly within their societies. People can effectively engage in the market place or in the public whenever dealing with contract and title deeds, politics, and basic health services, including HIV and AIDS as long as they are able to read and write and comprehend. Literacy thus liberates and empowers people to make generally meaningful and informed decisions, choices and actions as it increases the opportunity for individuals and communities to reflect on their situation

explore new possibilities and initiate positive and constructive change. Within the framework of the MGDS, the adult literacy policy is specifically linked to the following policies:

- Gender
- HIV and AIDS
- Land
- Reproductive Health
- Decentralization
- Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children
- Water and Sanitation

For these policies to realize their intended objectives and goals, individual citizens and communities must take an active interest to read and understand issues contained in them. Literacy therefore generates a substantial empowering and transformative effect by providing people with tools to understand change and exercise control over their destinies.

#### *1.1.4 Main development challenges*

##### *1.1.4.1 HIV and AIDS pandemic*

The HIV and AIDS pandemic continues to pose a major threat to the country's development efforts. The national prevalence rate is at 14% for ages 15-49 years. The effects of the pandemic has led to a growing number of sick people and orphans overburdening systems providing social and economic services including education, health and agriculture. In a bid to curb these challenges the adult literacy curriculum has incorporated topics which deal with HIV and AIDS.

##### *1.1.4.2 Poverty*

Poverty is rampant in Malawi with 52% of its population living below US\$1 per day, while 22% are classified as ultra-poor (NSO, 2005). The proportion is higher among

rural residents (54.9%). The result being that many people fail to access basic needs of their life for a healthy living. Poverty is directly linked to literacy.

#### *1.1.5 High illiteracy rate*

Illiteracy rate is still high at 42%. It is worse among women (49%) than men (36%). As already stated, poverty is directly associated with illiteracy because illiterate people have difficulties to comprehend development initiatives. Apart from that, the Literacy curriculum has also incorporated business related topics in which learners acquire knowledge in basic business management. In other cases the component of livelihood activities is incorporated in the literacy programme is to improve people's wellbeing.

#### *1.6 Other policies that impact on adult literacy*

Apart from the already stated policies, the MGDS, which runs from 2006 – 2011, provides a policy framework that articulates issues related to both economic growth and developments. The other policy is the National Education Sector Plan (NESP). It reflects Government's commitment to both regional (Southern African Development Community and the African Union) and International (Millennium Development Goals) targets and priorities and incorporates the existing Education for All (EFA) National Plan of Action aligned with the EFA Fast Track Initiative.

The MGDS where the NESP derives from states that education is a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless. Education enhances national solidarity, national consciousness and tolerance of diversity. It facilitates the development of a culture of peace which is conducive and essential for socio-economic, political and industrial development.

### ***1.2 Financing of Adult Literacy Education***

Although the financing of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Malawi is largely the responsibility of Government there are also quite a few donors and the private sector involved in the financing and delivery of ALE. Over the years, there has been a general

decrease in budgetary allocation towards ALE by government and donors (see for example, Table 1). One major contributory factor to this state of affairs is that the ALE sector faces stiff competition from the other sectors of education, especially the primary sector.

Precisely, public financing to Adult Education activities is channeled through such institutions as Ministries of Women and Child Development, Labor and Social Development, Health, Agriculture, Trade and Industry, Youth , Information and Civic Education, TEVETA, National Library Service, MEDI and District Assemblies. Furthermore, external donors continue to play a significant role on ALE financing especially with regard to the core activities which include recruitment of instructors/facilitators and purchase of teaching and learning materials and equipment. The Donor contributions come in two forms; firstly as multilateral aid which feature in the government budget and secondly as bilateral grants, which are not reflected in the Government budget. In addition to donors, NGOs have continued to support ALE with their various resources. However, the extent of their budgetary allocation is not clear. In Local communities increasingly play a role in ALE financing especially with regard to sharing the cost of learning shelters and their maintenance, provision of learning materials and provision of volunteer instructors. Costing of this contribution is also illusive.

**TABLE 1: Funding pattern to Ministry of Education vis-à-vis Adult Literacy**

<b>ALLOCATIONS TO ADULT LITERACY FOR THE PERIOD 2003-2007</b>					
<b>Approved Budgets 2003-2008</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
MOEST	8,834,889,000	10,638,611,965	11,988,880,735	12,466,228,909	20,576,959,792
MWCD	67,004,000	59,889,216	33,872,000	103,519,000	174,356,000
MOY	17,305,000	10,368,000	51,011,000	87,735,000	39,979,000
SUBVENTED organizations	1,400,034,018	2,824,455,048	3,460,868,100	5,168,248,580	6,820,457,000
<b>Total Education Budget</b>	<b>10,319,232,018</b>	<b>13,533,324,229</b>	<b>15,534,631,835</b>	<b>17,825,731,489</b>	<b>27,611,751,792</b>
<b>Adult Literacy</b>	50,000,000	21,048,752	28,472,000	82,318,876	42,414,889
<b>% for adult literacy</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.15</b>

*Source: Ministry of Finance Annual budget estimate documents*

For Malawi, currently the target is to achieve the literacy rate of 85% by 2011. To achieve that, the following resources would be necessary;

- 1) Resources for Institutional capacity building in terms of recruitment and training for instructors and their supervisors in adult education delivery. To achieve the targeted 85% literacy rate by 2011 as projected both by the MGDS and the Adult Literacy Policy there would be need for 106,560 operational classes translating into 106,560 instructors to be recruited by 2011. Thus there will be a requirement for honoraria at US\$36/Instructor per month amounting to close to US\$46,000,000 (for the 3 years or **US\$15,000,000/ year** whilst the training of these instructors and their supervisors will require **US\$714,286**).
- 2) Backstopping services for the programme will require **US\$357,143** for the 3 year period.
- 3) Procurement of teaching and learning materials for the 3 years will require **US\$357,143**. The total estimated finances required for the programme for the 3 years is **US\$47,097,143**.

## **CHAPTER 2:           QUALITY OF ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

This chapter examines the quality of adult learning in Malawi by highlighting the institutional frameworks for provision of adult learning, identifying providers of programs of adult learning, and discussing participation in adult learning. In addition the chapter discusses matters relating to monitoring and evaluation of adult learning programs. We begin by describing the provision of ALE in Malawi in terms of organization, coordination, management and available infrastructure.

#### *2.1.1 Provision and Managing of ALE at National Level*

The major provider of ALE as expected is Government through various ministries and departments at national, district and area levels. The leading Ministry responsible for provision of Adult literacy is Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD). The powerhouse for MWCD which also coordinates all adult literacy programmes is the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE). Other government ministries providing adult literacy are Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Non Governmental organizations (NGOs) are also involved in providing and managing adult literacy programmes. Key ones are Action Aid International Malawi, World Vision International, Swedish Corporation Centre (SCC) Lake Basin Project (LBP), OXFAM, Concern Universal, NASFAM, MUSSCO, CCAP Nkhoma Synod, Lutheran Development Services, and Association of Sunni Madrassa.

Other NGOs however, are largely involved in research, monitoring and advocacy for provision of quality adult literacy in the context of advancing the 2015 Education for all (EFA) goals. Such NGOs include Malawi Reflect Forum (MAREFO), Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE), Link for Education Governance (LEG) and Non-Formal and Formal Education Initiatives in Malawi (NAFIM). Provision

of Adult Literacy is financially and technically supported by government, donors and United Nations (UN) agencies. Donors and UN agencies involved include ICEIDA, UNESCO, and UNDP.

### *2.1.2 Coordination of ALE Programmes at National Level*

The Ministry of Women and Child Development through the NCLAE is mandated to coordinate ALE programmes at National level. The NCLAE is the largest provider of literacy and this is manifested in its goal which is “to make all adults sustainably and functionally literate”. NCLAE is mandated to provide technical and professional guidance for literacy implementation in terms of Curriculum development, Training and orientation of personnel, Monitoring Evaluation and Research, Printing, documentation and information dissemination services and supervisory support.

There are three key institutional mechanisms for coordination. Firstly there is NCLAE Secretariat situated in Lilongwe, which is functional but with minimal capacity due to financial constraints, personnel and lack of updated policy. The 2008 National Symposium on adult literacy recommended that the capacity of the secretariat be strengthened with resources and personnel. Secondly, there is supposed to be a National Advisory Council for Literacy and Adult Education (NACLAE) set up in 1983 but which has since become dormant. Thirdly, there is an inter-ministerial Committee on Basic Education and the National Steering Committee on ALE both of which are no longer functional. Recommendations have been made to ensure that the Advisory Council and Steering Committees be revived as soon as possible. (2008 Report On The National Symposium on Adult Literacy).

Coordination of NGOs involved in service provision, monitoring and advocacy for Adult literacy is being facilitated by a body called MAREFO. However inadequate capacity and skills are some of the setbacks. There is no clear forum where donors and cooperating partners supporting adult literacy services are coordinated although the education sector has what is called Development partners Forum hosted by MOEST.

### *2.1.3 Programmes in ALE*

There are a number of programmes being provided by stakeholders in Malawi. Key ones are Functional Literacy, REFLECT, STAR, Study Circle, Complimentary Basic Education, Rural resource Centres, Agriculture Extension Services, and Health education programmes. Others are research, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation programmes. The table below shows the programmes, providers, areas of learning, target groups and funding sources.

**TABLE 2: A Taxonomy of adult literacy providers in Malawi**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Area of Learning</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>
Functional Literacy	NCLAE/ NGOs FBOs, NASFAM, SSEP,	General competence, Knowledge generation	Adults	GOVT/ Donors
REFLECT	NGOs/ WRHS, CU, AAIM, SSEEP, ICEADA	General Competence, Knowledge generation, Innovation, Livelihood skills	Adults	NGOs/ Donors
STAR	AA, BLM (CONCERN)	General Competence, Knowledge generation, Innovation, Livelihood skills	PLWHA TOTs	Donors
Complimentary Basic education (CBE)	MOEST	General competence,	School Dropouts	Govt/ Donors
Rural Resource Centres	NLS MWCD	Post literacy reading materials (Knowledge generation)	Adults	Govt
Agriculture Extension Services	MoAgr NGOs (NASFAM)	Literacy, Farming techniques	Small holder Farmers	Govt/ Donors

Technical/ Life skills Development	MOEST/ TEVET/ Donors	Technical skills, Knowledge generation	Out of school youth	Govt/Donors
Health education programmes	MOH NGOs (CHAM)	General knowledge in health/care	Mothers/ parents	Govt/ Donors/ NGOs
Advocacy/monitoring/r esearch	NGOs (MAREFO, LEG, NAFIM, CSCQBE etc)	General Knowledge/ Policy or budget analysis/ Advocacy/ Sensitization	Policy makers (GOVT/ Communities)	Donors/ NGOs

#### *2.1.4 Linkages between Formal and Non Formal Approaches*

Linkages exist between formal and non formal approaches to adult literacy. The existing linkages are largely in terms of curriculum, language of instruction, as well as employment and career progression.

In terms of curriculum, ALE providers are using Functional Literacy and REFLECT Approaches both of which tend to inculcate reading, writing numeracy, and reasoning skills which are at the hub of formal education. Some graduates in the non-formal approaches end up writing the normal formal education examination in grade 8 of the Primary school sector and form 2 and 4 in the Secondary school sector. Some graduates in non-formal education approaches end up enrolling with different colleges for other skill trainings either in technology or other professionals. Adults and Out-of-school youths have taken non-formal education as an alternative to formal education. There is also an increasing demand to link literacy to livelihood activities (as promoted in REFLECT).

The languages of instruction are local languages with Chichewa being widely used although attempts are being made to promote mother tongue instruction and encourage use of English as in Formal Education. The instructors recruited are largely volunteers who have qualifications obtained from the formal system like those with PSLCE, JCE and above. In employment circles, some graduates of ALE can be employed just like other graduates from the formal education sector. In addition, some graduates are able to start their own small-scale businesses with the knowledge and skills gained in the non-formal education approaches just like those from the formal education sector. Moreover, some graduates are recognized in the community and are able to be given leadership positions just like other formally educated people in their communities. However the linkages are on a weak scale due to inadequate capacity, weak coordination, and weak legal (out dated 1962 Education Act) and policy (old policy being used) framework.

### *2.1.5 Certification and National Awards*

Graduates of ALE are provided with Certificates by both government and NGO providers. The Ministry of Women and Child Development awards certificates to participants who have attended adult literacy classes for 10 months. The certification exercise is decentralized such that Award ceremonies are conducted in various circles. NGOs give special awards of recognition and certificates from Ministry of Women and Child Development if they offer adult literacy classes. Considering that several stakeholders provide certificates the challenge lies in ensuring that this is well coordinated and this falls under NCLAE with support of DCDOs at District level.

## **2.2 Participation in ALE**

This section tackles participation rates, access to programmes, and the motivation and profile of target groups /learners.

### *2.2.1 Estimates of Literacy/illiteracy Rates*

The overall illiteracy rate is currently estimated at 42 percent, but when disaggregated in terms of gender, more women than men are illiterate.

The illiteracy rates for women and men are estimated at 49 percent and 36 percent respectively. The paradox, however, in Malawi is that illiteracy has been decreasing over the years but only in percentage terms. It has been steadily worsening in absolute terms. It is estimated that illiteracy stood at about 87.6 percent in 1966, 77.9 percent in 1977, 55 percent in 1987 and at about 40 percent following the 1998 Population and Housing Census (NSO 1998). The number of illiterate adults was projected at 1,976,218 in 1977, 3,848,414 in 1987 and at about 4.6 million during the 1998 Population and Housing Census. The statistics for 2005 indicated that illiteracy in the country had dropped from 90 percent in 1964 to 37.2 percent.

### *2.2.2 Programme Interventions*

Efforts to solve illiteracy were started by government as early as 1947. These efforts continued in terms of a partnership between the churches and government during the 1960's and 1970s in the *Ukani* Traditional Literacy programme. The most recent attempt to eliminate illiteracy among Malawi's adult population began on pilot between 1981-1985 with the support of UNESCO and UNDP. The pilot was done in Salima, Karonga and Ngabu Agriculture Development Divisions.

The government with support from various stakeholders has been implementing Non-Formal Education (NFE) to address the problem of illiteracy, especially among the youths and adults aged 15 years and above through National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) since 1986. It was the same year that government decided that implementation of its policy on the youths and adult literacy and education should be with the ministry responsible for Community Development Services by Government Notice under Education Act (CAP.30:01). Over the years, in response to the increasing burden of illiteracy and changing needs and approaches the country has been running the Functional Literacy Programme as a catalyst to poverty reduction.

It is estimated that there are over 8,000 adult literacy classes with an average of 25 learners per class operating across the country annually since the turn of the 1990s. This estimate includes literacy programmes provided by other service providers beside the NALP such as NGOs, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and even the private sector. Classes run entirely by the NALP are estimated at 4,400 countrywide annually. Some notable non-state actors involved in the provision of adult literacy programmes include Action Aid, World Vision, Oxfam and the Presbyterian Church of Central Africa (CCAP). But despite the apparent impressive coverage and a series of interventions stretching back to the colonial era, the problem of illiteracy remains intractable in the country.

The goal of NALP at its launch was to reach out to at least 2 million of the 4.6 million illiterate adults by the year 2000, but by 2006, the programme had only reached about

860,000 learners. These statistics clearly underlie the magnitude of failure of the set of interventions and programmes that have hitherto been carried out to fight illiteracy in the country. NALP was intended to meet government's intention to improve and strengthen the human resources development base. The programme was planned to provide learning and the acquisition of skills to adults especially farm families and out of school youths to compliment efforts in the formal education sector.

### *2.2.3 Recent Developments*

A very recent development in the adult literacy education sector in the country is the launch of the Sustainable Social and Economic Empowerment Programme (SSEEP) in 2003. The overall objective of the SSEEP, piloted in 12 districts across the country, is to promote the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) approach, which has been championed and popularized by several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) notably Action Aid. This approach encourages and enables participants to critically assess their lives, take control of their futures, enhance their literacy skills, generate a written vocabulary which is relevant to their own community or situation, recognize and build upon their knowledge, and mobilize for individual and collective actions.

The table below provides statistical data on participation from 2000 to 2006:

**TABLE 3: Participation of adult learners from 2000 to 2006**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>SECTOR</b>							
<b>PUBLIC</b>	44,124	35,299	38,829	40,771	41,586	51,983	64,978
<b>NGO</b>	2,677	2,433	3,042	5,070	8,450	13,000	17,334
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,801</b>	<b>37,732</b>	<b>41,871</b>	<b>45,841</b>	<b>50,036</b>	<b>64,983</b>	<b>82,312</b>

*Source: NALP*

#### *2.2.4 Surveys on Non Participation*

No formal surveys have been done. However, adult literacy programmes are not reaching all as demanded by the 2015 EFA goals. People excluded include, men, the elderly, the disabled persons, people living with HIV and AIDS, and people living in inaccessible rural areas. Some of the reasons for exclusion include low participation by men, the elderly being too weak to participate fully in ALE activities; the PLWHA are sometimes discriminated against in most groups in the rural areas and some places are difficult places to reach due to geographical problems. To increase participation the type of support required includes, funds for IGAs and skills training in modern farming and business management. There is also need for moral and technical support as well as health and HIV and AIDS services

#### *2.2.5 Measures to mobilize learners and increase participation*

In order to mobilize learners and increase participation the following measures have been undertaken nationally so far:

##### *Provision of notebooks and writing materials*

The Conventional adult literacy program encourages learners to source notebooks and writing materials on their own. However the functional Literacy component under Skills Development and Income Generation (SDIG) Project which has 400 classes and expects to make 12,000 adults literate annually piloted the idea of providing notebooks and pencils to learners in 2005.

The results have been overwhelming as shown in table 1.2 (output against planned targets) of October to December 2007 quarterly report.

<b>LEARNERS CYCLE</b>	<b>ANNUAL PLANNED TARGET</b>	<b>NO OF LEARNERS ASSESED</b>	<b>NO OF LEARNERS DECLARED LITERATE</b>	<b>OUTPUT RATE</b>
Cycle 1 – 2003	12,000	5,406	3,249	27%
Cycle 2 – 2004	12,000	7,581	5,300	44%
Cycle 3 – 2005	12,000	9,798	7,263	61%
Cycle 4 – 2006	12,000	13,749	11,164	93%
Cycle 5 – 2007	12,000	12,838	9,443	79%

*Production of a video titled ‘Wazona Dongolosi’*

As a way of targeting men, SDIG Project produced a video titled ‘Wazona Dongolosi’ which literally means “Dongolosi, faces problems”. The video depicts a man called Dongolosi landing in trouble because of his illiterate status.

*Introduction of livelihood activities*

Under the Sustainable Social Economic Empowerment Programme (SSEEP), which is a REFLECT programme, there is a component of livelihoods where learners get funded to run livelihood activities. The introduction of this aspect has greatly increased enrolment and participation of adult learners, particularly men because of the perceived economic gains.

*Linking literacy and business*

SDIG Project has a component of business management. Members who are illiterate but find themselves in these groups are advised to first withdraw attend adult literacy classes and join SDIG business groups later in order to benefit from the business Management trainings that the project offers. Malawi social action fund (MASAF) has a business related component called “Community Savings and Investment Promotion (COMSIP) which targets only those who are literate to participate.

### *Organizing meetings with community leaders*

Meetings are organized with community leaders. In these meetings the importance of literacy as it relates to development is emphasized and community leaders are called upon to mobilize their illiterate subjects to attend literacy classes. The result of these meetings is that some community leaders have made local bylaws in their villages, e.g. that all illiterates would either be charged a penalty fee of a chicken for not attending literacy classes, or they would be sidelined from all developments initiatives that come into the village.

### *Commemoration of international literacy day*

As a country, 8<sup>th</sup> September is commemorated every year. Observation of this day is through a national event where the Minister of Women and Child Development is invited as guest of honour. Apart from the national event, district events also take place. At these functions the importance of literacy is very much emphasized. Certificates are also presented to new graduates. In so doing illiterates are motivated to join these classes.

### *Special groups targeted by ALE provision*

In Malawi, special groups targeted by ALE provision are illiterate men and women, the elderly, the poor, and the unemployed youths and adults, 15 years and above. Other groups targeted are orphans and displaced, PLWA and disabled people

## **2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of adult literacy and type of approaches used are dependent on the two major approaches, namely Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) and the REFLECT approaches. The FAL operates within the framework of Malawi's 1986 policy (which has just been reviewed). As a programme the NALP was designed to meet functional literacy needs of beneficiaries and oriented towards contributing to the achievement of Malawi's development objectives. REFLECT is the second adult literacy approach used in Malawi and was introduced in May 1996 during a two-week briefing course organized by Action Aid UK in conjunction with Action Aid Malawi.

### *2.3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation of NALP - The functional adult literacy (FAL)*

The NALP has a well designed Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) system, which outlines the purpose of monitoring, what is to be monitored, the monitoring network and has well developed data collection instruments or forms. The system is designed in such a way that it collects quantitative and qualitative data generated in the very process of programme implementation. Data collection is done at regular intervals and the M & E system provides for feedback at all levels.

The information systems of ALE activities in the country are in tandem with national requirements as prescribed by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (EP&D). Precisely, different sectors carrying out ALE activities including the MWCD which is the lead Ministry in ALE activities have Planning Sections which are responsible for Monitoring the performance of ALE activities within the framework of established indicators in the MGDS performance monitoring table.

#### ***The Purpose of Monitoring***

Monitoring provides necessary data for decision making and planning. Specifically, the purpose of monitoring is:

- a) to provide a solid data base for decision-making at the various levels of the National Adult Literacy Programme;
- b) to provide all necessary information on progress, deficiencies and the actual state of the NALP;
- c) to show evidence to decision makers, policy makers or outside donors about the use of resources and funds allocated to the programme;
- d) to contribute to a better understanding of how the NALP works as a whole and at various levels of the system and to provide the necessary data base for formative ongoing and final evaluation, be it internal or external.

***What is to be monitored?***

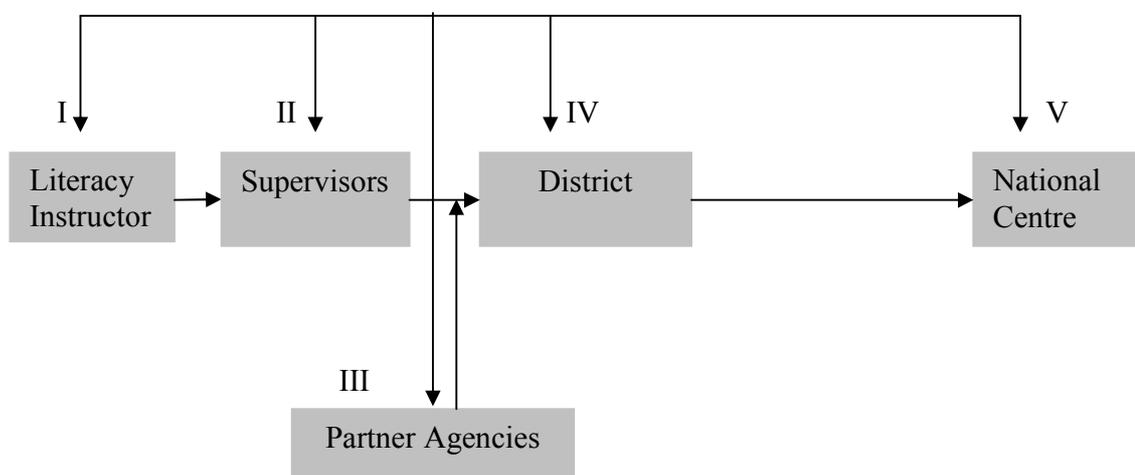
The programme monitors: the programme setting, learner participation, the instructors, the teaching-learning materials and supplies. Other factors are the process of teaching-learning, its duration, and time sequence, logistics and supervision, the linkages with development agencies and programmes, the post literacy activities, and the number of learners assessed and of learners declared literate. Data is collected through forms specifically designed for data generation at various levels such as instructor level, supervisor level, partner agencies, district level and national level.

***The monitoring network***

At every district, a coordinator is responsible for planning and implementation of the programme. The district coordinator is assisted by a group of supervisors (community development assistants), each in charge of supervising 15-20 classes in villages in close proximity. A Literacy Instructor is assigned to each class. The reporting system and levels for monitoring coincide with the levels of administration responsible for implementing the programme. The reporting levels accordingly take into account the cooperative relationships and shared responsibilities of the personnel from the field to the national level.

The monitoring mechanism in this context is thus essentially based on efficient flow of two-way communication as illustrated in Fig 1. below:

**Figure 1: Reporting Flow Chart**



The chain of reporting starts from the instructor who reports to the supervisor. The supervisor in turn reports to the District Officer. The District Officer includes the reports from Partner Agencies in his/her reports to the National Centre. Feedback on comments, action recommended or taken follows the same channels from the higher to the lower level, or directly across many levels as appropriate. This reporting channel is in line with the decentralization system.

The reporting network is comprehensive and highly interactive. This is good for Management on Information Systems if all levels are effective and well trained and supported. It could be easy to identify individual needs, strengths and weaknesses for the good of the system. It is obvious to assume that as a system, the results of the outlined Monitoring and Evaluation mechanism would depend on its implementation given adequate resources.

#### ***Challenges Associated with Monitoring and Evaluation of NALP***

There are a number of challenges faced in monitoring and evaluation of the Adult Literacy programmes. The first challenge is lack of policy and legal framework. The education sector in Malawi is using an outdated Education Act that makes it difficult to legally enforce monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. However, the anticipated approval of the National Adult Literacy Policy is expected to improve the situation.

The second challenge is inadequate financing of the National Adult Literacy Program (NALP). The funding has been inadequate to effectively respond to the demands of literacy activities in Malawi. As a result there are limited material and human resources at various levels. In addition there are lack of computers to process data and forms. There is also lack of backstopping ability and feedback to lower levels.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation in the REFLECT approach***

Reports and information clearly indicated that REFLECT approach to adult literacy programme has effective management, monitoring and evaluation systems. The Monitoring and Evaluation system used in REFLECT is different from NALP on the basis that REFLECT does not administer examinations to assess participants' achievement but it is based on the assumption that a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 10 months is enough for a person to know how to write, read and count. Curriculum is developed by the participants with the assistance of experts and guiding manual(s) with already set standards for REFLECT. This is so because in REFLECT, it is believed that topics to be discussed or taught should be identified locally. There are no national norms or standards since implementers of REFLECT vary them according to situations in which they operate.

### ***Elements of Monitoring and Evaluation in REFLECT***

REFLECT Committees are formed and these are responsible for managing classes and completing reports with the help of the facilitators. NGO project officers/CDAs make regular visits to the circles; compile monthly reports which are sent to their head offices. Moreover, quarterly and annual evaluation meetings of REFLECT circle committees are conducted to share experiences and plan way-forward. In recent years NGOs implementing REFLECT formed a network called MAREFO and this is central in evaluating progress and finds solutions to problems at national level. In addition development partners who support various NGOs/communities make visits to REFLECT circles either after six months or annually for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

## ***2.4 Adult Educators Status and Training***

Both the Functional Literacy and REFLECT classes are facilitated by a network of educators called instructors or facilitators. The instructors work on voluntary basis and are identified by the community. Once they are identified the instructors are given an induction course for about two weeks to manage adult learning. There are around 4,000 educators comprising 2,175 males and 1,756 females against an enrollment of 9,828 male

learners and 88,450 female learners at the time of reporting. In terms of qualification the instructors usually have a minimum qualification of Primary school grade 8 up to Form 4 secondary school certificate. Unfortunately, due to resource constraints, in-service courses are rarely offered to these instructors. The low qualification of educators undermines the quality of the literacy programmes. Stakeholders have since recommended that educators should have at least a secondary qualification especially Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE).

The instructors are paid a monthly honorarium at an amount determined by the provider. Government instructors are paid MK500 (4US\$) per month, while NGOs and donor institutions pay as much as MK1, 500 (12US\$). This is in sharp contrast to the international benchmarks that recommended a minimum wage which in Malawi is around K7, 000 (50US\$) per month. The 2008 Symposium on adult Literacy recommended that all instructors be offered at least MK5, 000 (US40) per month to motivate them.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH, INNOVATIONS AND GOOD PRACTICES**

### ***3.1 Key Research Studies in the Field of Adult Learning***

Key studies on Adult Learning conducted from 2003 have mainly been done by NCLAE, UNESCO, UNDP and some NGOs such as ICEIDA, Action Aid and some programmes under the Ministry of Women and Child Development such as SDIG and SSEEP. A number of issues and recommendations have been raised and made in these studies. Some of the recommendations have led to the review of the National Adult Literacy Policy and to the organization of Malawi's first National Adult Literacy Symposium held from 24 to 25 January, 2008. Described below are some of the studies.

#### *3.1.1 Proposed Roadmap towards revitalizing Adult Learning and Education (2003)*

The aim of the study which was carried out by NCLAE in 2003 was to assess how to create an opportunity for mobilizing public support towards literacy and adult education. The study revealed that NCLAE and NGOs implementing Adult Literacy Programmes have different Monitoring and Evaluation systems with their associated challenges. The study also revealed that there is lack of linkages between Formal and Non Formal Education.

#### *3.1.2 A Study on Adult literacy and Education in Malawi*

The purpose of this study, which was carried out by Kinteh (2003), a UNDP consultant, was to assess the illiteracy levels in Malawi and the impact of Adult Literacy programmes. The study revealed that illiteracy status in Malawi is very high. The study established that efforts to combat illiteracy in Malawi began in 1947 by various players with variations in their provision of adult literacy services. The study further established that there is high demand for the provision of adult literacy and education services.

### *3.1.3 Malawi Situational Analysis of Evaluation Practices on Non Formal Education and Adult Literacy and Education done in 2006 by NCLAE and UNESCO*

This study was carried out as part of an initiative by UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and Harare Cluster office within the context of a project on ‘Reinforcing National Capacities to Evaluate Non-formal Education (NFE) and literacy programmes for youths and adults’. The main goals of the initiative were to improve the quality of learning and enhancing programme impacts of NFE, literacy and adult education programmes, and build capacities of the providers in four areas: learner evaluation, curriculum evaluation, progress monitoring and impact evaluation. The study revealed that there were several challenges that Malawi was experiencing in M&E including: limited capacity, high staff turnover, and inadequate resources such as computers, vehicles and funds.

### *3.1.4 Assessment Study on Provision of Non Formal Education Services in NAFIM’s Impact Areas, done in 2006*

The main aim of the study was to assess the extent of the need for Non Formal Education and Lifeskills services in NAFIM’s impact areas with the aim of designing programme interventions to contribute towards reducing illiteracy, poverty and unemployment. The findings of the study showed that there is great need for the NFE and Adult Literacy services in Malawi, and also that there were fewer NFE and Adult Literacy centers available than the demand. The study established further that most of NFE and Life skills services desired by adults were provided by the private sector at a cost that most poor Malawians in the rural areas could not afford. On participation in existing adult literacy centres, the study confirmed what similar studies had also established that more women than men patronize the few Adult Literacy centers provided by NCLAE and some NGOs.

### *3.1.5 Education For All Mid-Term Review for Malawi.*

The main aim of the study commissioned by UNESCO Harare Cluster office in 2007 was to review Malawi’s progress towards attainment of the EFA goals and map out the way forward to accelerate the progress. The mid term review also assesses progress being made in achieving the EFA Goal on Adult Literacy (EFA Goal 4). The Mid-Term Review exercise showed that there is low profile accorded to Adult Literacy and

Education and there is lack of interest by most illiterates especially males to participate in Adult Literacy classes, and that there is inadequate funding to Adult Literacy programmes by government and NGOs.

### *3.1.6 Study on Continuing Education in Malawi*

The study done by UNESCO (Harare Cluster office) in 2006 was aimed at examining government's policy, policy instruments/circulars and programmes on continuing education with the aim of recommending a framework and mechanism for policy and programme review in order to reinforce the education sector's capacity to respond to emerging challenges associated with life long learning. The study reviewed the various types of continuing education programmes, classified into six categories: Post Literacy Programmes, Equivalency Programmes (defined as alternative education programmes equivalent to existing formal general or vocational education such as the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE), and Technical Education and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET)), Income-generating Programmes (e.g. Small Enterprise Development Project (SED) by TEVETA, Quality of Life Improvement Programmes (e.g. WID, SDIG), Individual Interest Promotion Programmes (e.g. tertiary education, technical colleges and universities) and Future Oriented programmes (e.g. Malawi Institute of Education, Staff Development Institute (Mpemba)).

The study revealed that there is no policy on continuing education in Malawi. The study recommended the establishment of the Malawi Open University by transforming the MCDE whose mandate was changed after all Distance Education Centers (DECs) which it was catering for were turned into Community Day Secondary Schools in 1998.

### ***Major Questions Addressed and Prompted by these Studies***

A summary of the questions addressed in the studies outlined above is as follows:

#### **Access**

- What is the level of availability, access and provision of ALE in Malawi?
- What is the status of literacy in Malawi?

- What opportunities exist to learners for post literacy and continuing education?

### **Equity**

- What is the level of participation in adult literacy classes by sex, location and type of programme approach (FAL/REFLECT)?
- How can participation of both men and women in adult literacy be expanded?
- What type of teaching and learning materials are available and in what quantities?

### **Quality**

- What issues does the adult literacy curriculum address?
- What are the views of the learners about the curriculum?
- What is the level of qualification of instructors?

### **Governance and Management**

- What kind of support is given for the development of Adult Literacy programmes?
- What are the capacity needs and levels existing amongst adult literacy providers?
- What level of awareness exists amongst Malawians on adult literacy?
- How can literacy programs in Malawi be strengthened?
- What is Malawi's progress towards attaining EFA goal 4: 'Increasing adult literacy by 50% by 2015'?
- How is Malawi's performance towards EFA in comparison to other countries in SADC region, Africa and the world?
- What kind of M&E structure is in place? How effective is M&E? What are the challenges in M&E for adult literacy?
- What linkages exist with the formal education programmes under Ministry of Education, Science and Technology?

### **Limitations/ questions that have not been adequately addressed.**

- Linkages between MOEST and MOWCD on curriculum matters

- The role of higher education institutions, the universities, and colleges in adult literacy programmes
- What are the literacy/educational needs of adult learners with special educational needs?
- The role and place of information and communication technologies in ALE?
- Tracer studies on literacy class graduates on post literacy activities?

### ***The Key Findings of the Studies***

The findings of all the studies undertaken can be summarized as follows:

- Existence of a semi-autonomous national adult literacy center with specialized units and facilities
- Existence of a Community Development College for training extension workers in specialized literacy and adult education
- A number of stakeholders and projects supporting adult literacy and non formal programmes
- Some graduates from these adult literacy and education programmers now able to effectively carry out accounts in their business
- The leadership role played by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Youth Development and Sports in non-formal education for out-of-school youths and adult literacy and education for adults.
- Government's commitment to revive Rural Growth Centers for rural development activities.
- A high demand for literacy and non-formal education.
- Existence of local and international frameworks such as the EFA, UNLD, MDGs, NESP, Youth Policy, Gender Policy, Policy on the Ederly and Disabled people.
- Government's commitment to fiscal discipline and expenditure control to qualify for HIPC budgetary support and debt cancellation from the World Bank and IMF.
- Majority of those attending adult literacy classes are women.
- Non-existence and weak inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral linkages on literacy programmers.
- Non-availability of policy guidelines to implement adult literacy programmes

- Unclear role and place of literacy education programme in the development agenda of government as contained in the MGDS.
- Poor coordination of adult literacy programmes between government and NGOs.
- Lack of adequately trained staff to articulate policy, programmatic, curricular and pedagogy issues on adult literacy and non-formal education.
- Under-utilization of existing facilities, e.g. printing press at NCLAE, and training centres of NCLAE and Magomero College (for training CDAs)
- Poor monitoring of the programmes.
- Resource allocation to NCLAE and its capacity to make and implement decisions are affected because of its placement under Community Services Directorate
- Limited capacity amongst planners and policy makers to articulate adult literacy and non-formal education policy, the system and structure.
- Poor, inconsistent and uncoordinated funding from government and donors towards adult literacy and non-formal education programmers.
- High staff turn-over and vacant posts at all levels.

***Influence of studies on policy and practice***

- The studies have influenced government to come up with a clear policy on adult literacy and non-formal education.
- The studies have also exposed the existing gaps in national policies and programme documents such as MGDS in as far as literacy, non-formal education and adult learning are concerned
- The studies have influenced the thinking that has gone into the new policies that are being developed where, among others:
  - there is a call for spelling out implementation arrangements with the involvement of all stakeholders.
  - there is need to revisit the role and functions of NCLAE and its institutional framework.
  - the need to align ALE to the development agenda of government.
  - the need to align and harness all non-formal education training programmes and review policy regulation, programmes coordination,

linkages with other providers, and resource mobilization mechanisms and strategies.

- the need for NCLAE to be set up as an autonomous government agency. (e.g. in order for it to have a leverage to operate and discharge its mandate at inter-ministerial level and for it to be directly accountable to Malawians on its activities as well as to be a cost center with its own budget).
- the need to revive the Adult Literacy Council as provided for in the Adult Literacy Act. e.g. membership and its funding to be reviewed.
- the need for government and development partners to facilitate the strengthening of the Magomero Community Development College (MCDTC), e.g. by producing highly qualified planners, trainers of trainers, curriculum developers, monitors, evaluators and researchers in adult literacy and non-formal education.
- the need for higher education institutions to introduce courses in literacy and non-formal education.
- the need to create and make available a Malawi National Data Base on literacy programme.

### ***3.2 Innovations and Examples of Good Practices.***

The review process of the 1986 Adult Literacy policy which was consultative and more encompassing is a good example of policy formulation that Malawi has experienced since 1997 CONFINTEA as a cross section of views were taken into account. In terms of financing, an innovative practice is the direct financial support to REFLECT Circle Committees by Action Aid which is intended to support income-generating activities to sustain their activities, e.g. Action Aid.

## **Mobilization of Learners, involvement of learners in programme design, emergence of learners as partners**

### ***Good Practices***

From the reports compiled by both NGOs and public sectors providing Adult Literacy Education programs, the major identified good practices that assist to mobilize learners, involve them in the programme design, emergence of learners as partners could be summarized as follows:

- Formation of ALE Committees to manage centers
- Visits to the ALE centers by NGO project officers and CDAs
- Compilation of monthly reports to their offices
- Carrying out quarterly and annual evaluation exercises and meetings
- Formation of networks on ALE by NGOs e.g MAREFO.
- Frequent visits to ALE centers by donors to monitor and evaluate progress

### ***Innovations***

The Adult Literacy and Education providers and participants in the centers practice some innovations in a number of ways. These innovations depend on the approach used for the provision of adult literacy programme. The major approaches to adult literacy and education in Malawi are the STAR, NALP, Study Circle and REFLECT. The government Ministries and NGOs using these approaches create a number of innovations that assist the participants of these adult literacy programmes. Examples of these innovations by various approaches and providers are as follows:

#### **The STAR, Study Circle, NALP and REFLECT providers in Malawi all:**

- Encourage the participants to join their circles and have access to Business and Agriculture loans.
- Disseminate information on HIV and AIDS and assist in behavioral change.
- Discuss socio-economic issues in the community and identify the possible solutions.

- Organize open days and exchange visits for exposure and knowledge acquisition.
- Provide training to the participants in their circles in business management skills before loans are provided to them.
- Assist to link participants to development partners and lending institutions such as DEMATT, MRFC, SEDOM, FINCA, MEDI, TEVET and many more
- Provide direct benefits to Adult Literacy learners by assisting them with skills in reading writing and counting
- Establish Information Centers (RICs) for access to post literacy materials that can be accessed, radio listening groups and National Library services.

***Why listed examples are considered innovations in Malawi***

They give power to participants to look at the Adult Literacy and Education programmes and approaches as not for other people but for themselves. Hence they create the spirit of ownership, participation, involvement, support and sustainability of the ALE activities in the impact area.

## CHAPTER 4: ADULT LITERACY

### 4.1 Introduction

The definition of literacy world over has evolved over time, influenced by academic research, international policy agendas and national priorities. However, a fundamental thread that runs through all the interpretations and understandings is that *literacy embodies reading and writing skills*. Numeracy is generally understood as a complement to or a component of literacy.

The International Symposium on Literacy held in Persepolis in 1975 and the UNESCO General Conference in 1978 adopted a definition of functional literacy which is still in use today, i.e.: *A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development*. The notion of *functional literacy* gained ground and emphasized links between literacy, productivity and overall socio-economic development. However, recent perspectives have also involved the ways in which literacy is used and practiced in different social and cultural contexts. Many educators have come to view literacy as an *active process of learning involving social awareness and critical reflection, which can empower individuals and groups to promote social change*. Paulo Freire's theory of conscientisation, which views literacy as embodying social awareness and critical reflection, and as an integral factor in social change has gained popularity.

Over the 1980s and 1990s, definitions of literacy broadened to accommodate the challenges of globalization, including the impact of new technology and information media and the emergence of knowledge economies. In countries with high literacy rates, assessing the range of adult literacy skills in evolving labour markets and knowledge-based societies has come to the fore. Greater attention is also paid to the languages in which literacy is learned and practiced. *Literacy is about the acquisition and use of*

*reading, writing and numeracy skills, thereby fostering the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, 2007).*

#### **4.2 How literacy is defined in Malawi**

The definition of literacy as applied in Malawi's context can be deduced from the approaches adopted and emphasized by government in its implementation of literacy programmes and from the goals and objectives of basic education outlined in national policy and strategy documents such as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MDGS), the National Education Sector Plan, the National EFA Plan of Action and the National Adult Literacy Policy (draft 2006).

The National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP) piloted between 1981 and 1986 and rolled out in 1986 to date emphasises a Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) approach. The NALP was designed primarily to meet the needs of about 3.8 million illiterates aged 15 and above (according to the 1987 Population and Housing Census) to give them a second chance of learning opportunities which they missed out in their youth. The idea was that this would enable them access information on health, nutrition and agriculture and thus improve their standard of living. The MDGS outlines under Theme three (Social Development), Sub-theme Four (Education) three priority goals of basic education. Priority one under this sub-theme states that basic education is intended 'to equip learners with basic knowledge and skills to enable them function as competent and productive citizens. This goal coupled with the REFLECT approach that government has adopted over the years in literacy programmes run by some NGOs caps the definition of adult literacy expounded in the National Adult Literacy policy (draft 2006) which defines adult literacy as a learning process designed to equip illiterate beneficiaries aged 15 and above with specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes and techniques to independently engage in listening, speaking, reading, writing, numeracy, technical and critical thinking intended to promote the development of active citizenship.

### ***4.3 New Policies and Strategies Adopted and Implemented***

Since the last CONFINTEA V held in Hamburg in 1997 a number of policies have been developed to promote the delivery of adult literacy programmes. Some of these policies have been cited in chapter 1. The policies outlined below are those that have impacted on the literacy aspect of ALE.

#### ***4.3.1 HIV and AIDS Policy***

In 2003 Malawi adopted a national policy on HIV and AIDS, 'A Call to Renewed Action'. The goals of the policy are to: 1. Prevent the further spread of HIV infection; and 2. Mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS on the socioeconomic status of individuals, families, communities and the nation. The policy recognises the role literacy plays in information and education programmes. The policy commits government to the development of adequate, accessible, culturally sound, age-appropriate formal and non-formal effective HIV and AIDS information and education programmes. The HIV and AIDS policy has promoted the availability of reading materials in various major local languages, such as posters, billboards, fliers, and books supplied by a number of stakeholders including the National Library Services.

#### ***4.3.2 Gender Policy***

The National Gender Policy (2000) recognises literacy of women as an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society. The policy advocates for equality between girls and boys, women and men in terms of access and availability. The launch of the Gender policy has raised awareness on gender issues and has led to increased participation of women in socio-economic activities. The challenge with adult literacy classes is to attract as many men as well since most of the adult literacy classes are dominated by women.

#### ***4.3.3 Decentralisation Policy***

Government adopted the National Decentralisation Policy in 1998 which seeks to devolve powers and functions of governance and development to district Assemblies with the aim of letting them take over functions which were being performed by

deconcentrated units of central government at the district level. Financially, the decentralisation policy has given Assemblies a wider mandate in terms of raising their own revenue. They have power to levy local taxes. This has translated to literacy programmes being integrated in the District Education Committees at District Assembly level and Area Development Committees (ADCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) at area and village level respectively. As a result more attention is being given to literacy programmes by community leaders and members as well as programme implementers like NGOs.

#### **4.2.1 Agricultural Extension in the New Millennium Policy**

The Agricultural Extension in the New Millennium Policy: ‘Towards Pluralistic and Demand-driven Services in Malawi’ was adopted in 2000. The aim of the policy is to serve farmers better through a pluralistic, demand-driven extension services. This is based on the fact that Malawi is an agro-based economy. Literacy is captured under section 3.10 ‘*Low literacy level of farmers*’. The policy recognises that illiteracy is a big challenge to the extension service in the sense that illiterate farmers have difficulties to understand the technologies that are discussed with the extension service providers. This affects the effectiveness of extension service. The policy therefore acknowledges that effective agricultural productivity goes beyond increased farm produce, and extends to entrepreneurship which requires a farmer to be able to read, write and perform some numerical calculations.

#### **4.2.2 Complementary Basic Education**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology introduced in 2005 on a pilot basis a non-formal education programme targeting school drop outs and those who never attended school called Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in four districts. The programme is aimed at providing essential knowledge, skills and values to promote self-reliance, encourage life long learning and full participation in societal development. The CBE curriculum emphasises on literacy (first language and English) and numeracy.

### **4.2.3 Medium of Instruction**

Government has reviewed the 1986 policy on Adult Literacy. The draft policy (2006) proposes the use of dominant local languages in the delivery of adult literacy programmes since research shows that mother tongue allows creativity and facilitates learning. The policy further advocates for translation of the learning materials into major local languages.

### **4.2.4 Malawi Growth and Development Strategy**

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) (2006-2011) is the overarching operational medium-term strategy for Malawi designed to attain the nation's Vision 2020. The main thrust of the MGDS is to create wealth through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development as a means of achieving poverty reduction. The MGDS recognises the strategic importance of literacy as a vehicle for poverty alleviation though it has no special provision for adult literacy programmes.

## ***4.4 Examples of Effective Practice and Innovative Literacy Programmes***

### **4.4.1 Effective Practices**

#### ***Access and Equity***

- The devolution of management of literacy programmes to the District Assemblies, Area Committees and Village Committees promotes demand driven establishment of literacy learning circles.
- Literacy campaigns through newspapers, radio and TV during the International Literacy Day (8<sup>th</sup> September) and during certificate presentation ceremonies motivate more learners to dominate the literacy classes.

#### ***Quality and relevance***

- The use of participatory approaches in literacy programmes such as REFLECT, STAR, COMSIP (discussed below) and in health and agriculture

sectors where learners are involved in content development and learning process.

- Reviewing of curriculum and development of learning materials that are relevant to the learners' and community' needs, e.g. the ICEIDA support project in Monkey Bay and SSEEP where the community members were involved in the development of the learning materials.
- Inclusion of topics on HIV and AIDS, business management and entrepreneurship skills, agriculture, fishery and community development work which act as an attraction for learners especially men whose participation is low.

### ***Governance and management***

- The formation of ALE Village Committees to manage literacy classes in NALP and other programmes enhances the ownership spirit.
- The formation of networks on ALE by NGOs and other fora has helped to raise the profile of literacy programmes and increased transparency and accountability.
- The involvement of traditional leaders, chiefs and village headmen has promoted access, equity, relevance, governance and management. Because of the authority that chiefs have over the management of literacy centres, they are able to effectively contribute to better management of the literacy centres by among others, identifying suitable venues for the literacy classes, storage facilities; mobilising their subjects to contribute towards the development of the centres; and instituting monitoring strategies to reduce absenteeism amongst learners and instructors.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

- The decentralised monitoring and evaluation structures which comprise visits to the ALE centers by NGO's project officers and CDAs.
- Compilation of monthly reports by implementing organisation

- Surveys, research, workshops, conferences and symposia, e.g. the National Symposium on Adult Literacy held in January, 2008.
- Linking M&E to mainstream EP&D Framework

#### **4.4.2 Innovative programmes and Why they are considered innovative**

##### **SSEEP**

The Sustainable and Economic Empowerment Programme (SSEEP) for poverty reduction, a UNDP supported programme implemented jointly by government and NGOs between 2004 and 2007. The principal objective of the programme was to promote interventions to empower vulnerable groups to enhance their livelihood base in a sustainable manner. The programme was implemented through district planning structures and targeted all illiterate adults and youths above primary school-going age (15+). Improvement of literacy, numeracy and life-skills was one of the several objectives of the programme which mainly focused on increasing livelihood opportunities through promoting income-generating activities and the sustainable management of natural resources.

##### **ICEIDA**

The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) is implementing an adult literacy project in Monkey Bay. The project, which began in 2001 uses the REFLECT approach. The project, whose objective is to assist Government in poverty reduction by strengthening the national adult literacy programme, is targeted at farming families in T/A Nankumba area. The project has developed 25 easy-to-read post literacy titles and other post literacy materials with the active involvement of the learners themselves.

##### **STAR**

STAR is an approach which was introduced in the country by Actionaid International with funding from European Commission. The STAR approach

facilitates and supports the active participation of people and communities affected by HIV and AIDS in the fight against the virus through joint reflection, planning and action. It is a community driven and people centred holistic HIV and AIDS intervention that provides and strengthens critical social spaces and support structures. As a participatory approach it encourages a sustainable, community driven HIV and AIDS response, generating community energy for advocacy, action and social change. It enables those involved to analyse and understand HIV from a gender and rights perspective, to strengthen their capacity to communicate - within personal relationships, the community and wider environment - and to plan actions to avert vulnerability and to challenge discriminatory practice which facilitates the spread of HIV, and secure livelihood and other human rights.

Literacy in STAR context goes beyond reading, writing and numeracy to include provision of relevant information, knowledge and basic life skills that will enable circle participants and community to understand and address issues that affect them in the context of HIV/AIDS. Literacy skills, adequate knowledge and information enable participants to be aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities and they begin to demand and access essential services.

### **COMSIP**

The Community Savings and Investment Promotion (COMSIP) is a programme implemented under Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). It is intended to equip participants of literacy classes in the beneficiary communities with knowledge and skills on modern farming, business management, health issues including reproductive health and HIV&AIDS, democracy, decentralisation, voting and religious matters.

## **CHAPTER 5: EXPECTATIONS OF CONFINTEA VI**

This chapter outlines Malawi's principal expectations of CONFINTEA VI and the challenges on ALE that are to be addressed in order to improve service delivery of ALE. These expectations and challenges are drawn from the proceedings of the National Symposium on Adult literacy that was held from 24 to 25 January, 2008.

### **5.1 *Expected Outcomes from CONFINTEA***

#### **5.1.1 *Raising the Profile of Adult literacy***

It is the expectation of the Malawi Government that CONFINTEA VI will raise the profile of adult literacy as a prominent aspect and necessary condition for the attainment of the MDGs. Development partners, NGOs, donor countries and international organisations should increase their attention and funding towards ALE. Linkages between ALE and the global agendas like the MDGs, the climate change and democracy should be clarified to justify the need for increased attention towards ALE.

#### **5.1.2 *Communiqué/Declaration - a call for renewed commitment***

The conference should, at the end, adopt a communiqué or a declaration on the outcome of the discussions. The communiqué should outline the commitments made by the member states to be attained at stipulated time targets.

#### **5.1.3 *World Status Report on Adult Literacy***

A comprehensive report on the status of Global Adult Literacy should be produced building upon the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report and the subsequent EFA reports. The report should among others outline the achievements that countries have made since 1997 CONFINTEA V in all areas including budgetary allocations. Progress towards implementing the 3% minimum requirement of budget allocation to the adult literacy over the National Education budget should be presented. Countries that have attained, those that will attain and those that will not achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy levels should be listed.

## **5.2 *Issues to be addressed***

### **5.2.1 *Mobilisation of funding***

There is need to move from rhetoric to tangible results. At the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 member states were assured that ‘no country will fail to attain the EFA goals on account of lack of funding support’. Adult literacy being one of the EFA goals has been incorporated in the National EFA Plans of Action. Mobilisation of funding to support the national EFA plans of Action has proved to be a big challenge in the past half of the EFA plan period. Sadly, the World Bank Fast Track Initiative (FTI) which is one of the few windows of opportunity to translate the EFA ambitions into reality does not give adult literacy much prominence.

### **5.2.2 *Strengthening Networking***

There will be need for the conference to take stock of the achievements and challenges faced in networking efforts and develop an outline of action points that need to be accomplished to address the challenges.

### **5.2.3 *Special Needs***

The Conference should discuss and outline literacy and educational needs of persons with special educational needs. Most national policies on special needs education only cater for formal primary, secondary and some of tertiary education. Little is done for adult literacy learners. Yet a sizeable number of current adult learners dropped out of conventional schooling on account of some form of disability. Failure to take into account of such disabilities in adult literacy programmes only serves to accentuate their disenfranchisement. It is also a generally accepted fact, for example, that most adult literacy learners are advanced in age and susceptible to eye sight problems which affect their learning process. Deliberate efforts need to be made to accommodate such disabilities when dealing with adult learners.

#### *5.2.4 Capacity Needs*

CONFITEA VI should address the capacity needs of developing countries, especially in management, research, monitoring and evaluation as well as information and management systems. Others issues to be addressed:

- What best practices on institutional arrangement can be recommended for countries to follow?
- What should be the appropriate location of National institutions/organisations that oversee adult literacy programmes considering that most are placed in separate ministries from those responsible for the formal primary, secondary and tertiary education?

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## **APPENDIX: MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL REPORT WRITING TEAM**

Mr M. F. P. Mvuma	National Coordinator, NALP – Chairman
Mr M.W. Ng’ombe	Executive Director, NAFIM
Ms J. Juma	Education Coordinator, Actionaid
Mr E. Domoya	Chairman, MAREFO
Mr Limbani Nsapato	Executive Director, Link for Education Governance
Mr C. L. Mkunga	M&E Officer, NCLAE
Mr D. Mulera	Assistant Executive Secretary (Education), UNESCO
Mr C. Dzimadzi	Programme Manager, FLIRD - Secretary