Research Report

INCREASING ACCESS TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MALAWI: DOES PRIVATE SCHOOLING DELIVER ON ITS PROMISES?

By

Joseph Chimombo, Elizabeth Meke,
Benjamin Zeitlyn and Keith M. Lewin

July, 2013

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Executive Summary

This research report provides an overview of private secondary education in Malawi based on analysis if secondary data and empirical case studies in fifteen schools using interviews and a survey of 1000 students. The case study schools were chosen as mid to low price in terms of the range of fees charged by private schools. These schools were all for profit and were owned by private proprietors operating commercially. The purose of the research was to update the map of private provision at secondary school level, establish whether the growth in the number of schools in the late 1990s had continued through the 2000s, explore the characteristics of households and pupils attending private schools, and illuminate key issues for the future development of the education system arising from changing patterns of provision. In so doing the research makes a contribution to the debates around so called "low cost private schools for the poor.

Private for profit secondary schools in Malawi now account for about 25% of all secondary enrolments and a somewhat larger proportion of the number of schools since they tend to be smaller than publicly funded schools. The 25% of enrolments includes high fee schools out of rich of all but the wealthiest parents. Private schools remain lightly regulated and loosely organised with no substantial chains of schools. The attitude of the State to private schools has swung from a laisser faire enabling environment in the early 2000s through a period of inspection and closure of schools in substandard premises in 2009. Some schools have since reopened and numbers are back up to the same level as in the mid 2000s.

Several findings stand out. Private secondary schools in Malawi are not low price in relation to household incomes and the national poverty line. Few outside the top quintile of household income are likely to be enrolled and most will be in the top decile. They are therefore not affordable by the poor. Private schools perform better than government community day secondary schools in examinations, but not as well as established conventional secondary schools. However, this does not account for any selection effects that exist. Private secondary schools have more equal gender ratios in terms of the exam candidates they enter than do other types of school.

Our case studies and data analysis provide insights into a number of key issues. Most have no governing boards, poor infrastructure, no proper records of attendance and achievement, and do not publish accounts ar undertake audits which are transparent of financial affairs. There are high proportions of unqualified teachers and little evidence of innovative teaching methods or breadth in the curriculum beyond that required to perform well on conventional closed book highstakes examination in Form 4. Learning material, furniture and infrastructure in most schools fell short of levels necessary for effective learning above a basic level. The private schools in the sample have a high staff and student turnover creating a constant flux of people and little stability. Those who fail to pay the fees have to leave school or seek admission to a government school if there is one in the locality. Pupils in the case study schools are only from the wealthiest quintile in Malawi as far as we could establish. This was true despite the case studies including schools with the lowest band of fees available. The private secondary schools with lower fee

levels appear to cater mostly for children from top quintile households who have not been able to gain access to conventional government schools or grant in aid schools. They also attract those who are repeating the Malawi School Certificate to improve their grades. The indications are that in general the schools do not provide access to quality secondary schooling for the poor and that there is no clear evidence that they are innovative, efficient or particularly effective.

This research is a result of collaboration, support and dedication from many individuals. While it is impossible to name them all, we would like to extend special thanks to all the respondents and participants in the study including the learners in private schools, head teachers, teachers, and key informants for their valuable time and information. A hard working team of research assistants list names...) helped us to do the case studies. We are also grateful to the numerous officials in district and division education offices, in the Ministry of Education, the Malawi National Exam Board who assisted us. The president and executive secretary of The Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA) were also very helpful and generous with their time. The Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) at Chancellor College hosted this research and provided infrastructure support to enable the data collection and analysis.

This research was possible through the funding provided by the Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI) of the Open Society Foundations (OSF). We thank PERI for their financial assistance.

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Foreword

This research addresses important questions about the development of private schooling in Malawi at secondary level. There is much current discussion about the role private for profit schools can play in addressing educational needs in poor countries and the analysis and case studies provided in this report illuminate the extent to which this is currently true in one of the poorest countries in Africa. The study builds directly from case studies undertaken by the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) at the University of Malawi ten years ago by a team led by Joseph Chimombo and Keith Lewin. It is timely to revisit the issues raised by the research, which was published by DFID in 2005 in their Researching the Issues series.

In 2012 the opportunity arose to revisit the original research a decade later as a contribution to the PERI Programme of the OSF. As a result, in early 2013 a new research team was established at CERT with Joseph Chimombo, Elizabeth Meke, x,y,z and Keith Lewin and Benjamin Zeitlyn from the University of Sussex. The research was undertaken over the first six months of 2013 using analysis of secondary data, an extended case study sample of private schools, and interviews with key informants in the schools, Ministry of Education, development agencies, The Malawi National Exam Board (MANEB), ISAMA and the University of Malawi. This report is the first output from the research project.

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Keith Lewin

Acronyms and abbreviations

CDSS	-	Community Day Secondary Schools
CERT	-	Centre for Educational Research and Training
CIE	-	Centre for International Education
CREATE	-	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CSS	-	Conventional Secondary School
CSS	-	Conventional Secondary Schools
DEC	-	Distance Education Centre
DEM	-	District Education Manager
DEMIS	-	District Education Management Statistics
DFID	-	Department for International Development
DHS	-	Demographic and Health Survey
DIAS	-	Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services
EDPII	-	Second Education Plan
EFA	-	Education For All
EMIS	-	Education Management Information Systems
EPDC	-	Education Policy and Data Centre
ESIP	-	Education Sector Improvement Plan
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
FL1	-	Female Learner in Form 1
FL4	-	Female learner in Form 4
FPE	-	Free Primary Education
FT	-	Female Teacher
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
GER	-	Gross Enrolment Rate
GNI	-	Gross National Income
GoM	-	Government of Malawi
GPF	-	General Purpose Fund
GPI	-	Gender Parity Index
HDRC	-	Human Development Resource Centre
HIV/AIDs	-	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
HT	-	Head Teacher
IFPRI	-	International Food Policy Research Institute
ISAMA	-	Independent Schools Association of Malawi
ISASA	-	Independent Schools Association of South Africa
JCE	-	Junior Certificate of Education
MANEB	-	Malawi National Examination Board
MCC	-	Malawi Correspondence College
MCDE	-	Malawi College of Distance Education
MGDS	-	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy

MK	-	Malawi Kwacha
ML1	-	Male Learner in Form 1
ML4	-	Male Learner in Form 4
MOEST	-	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MSCE	-	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MT	-	Male Teacher
MTEF	-	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NER	-	Net Enrolment Ratio
NESP	-	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	-	Non-Government Organisation
NSO	-	National Statistical Office
ODSS	-	Open Day Secondary School
OPC	-	
OSF	-	Open Society Foundations
PERI	-	Privatisation in Education Research Initiative
PIF	-	Policy and Investment Framework
PRISAM	-	Private Schools Association of Malawi
PRSP	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSLCE	-	Primary School Leaving Certification Examination
PTR	-	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SDI	-	Staff Development Institute
UK	-	United Kingdom
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIMA	-	University of Malawi
US$	-	United States Dollar
USA	-	United Stated of America

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study

Introduction

In 2005, the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) in conjunction with the Centre for International Education (CIE) at the University of Sussex undertook a study on private schooling in Malawi funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). The focus of the study was on the processes involved in education provision in secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to explore the manner in which the private schools were satisfying the demand for secondary schooling. Among the major findings of the study was that private schools were supplementing government efforts in secondary school provisioning, judging by their high enrolments. However, lack of control and regulatory mechanisms meant that the quality of the education offered in both government Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) and private schools was very low. Most private schools were owned by proprietors who were focused on profit, pointing to the need for the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) to make sure that these businessmen were oriented to the basic ethics of schooling with some degree of transparency and accountability. Private schools were not included in MOEST's EMIS system and this lack of data on schools and light regulation and enumeration severely constrained efforts to map the private school sector and rendered any meaningful monitoring of the sector ineffective.

The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) (MoEST, 2008) projected that rapid increases in enrolment in secondary schooling would be obtained partly through increases in private enrolment of 90% by 2012 and 230% by 2017. Towards this end, several efforts have been made to improve the functioning of the private schooling sector. The Ministry of Education has tried to regulate the sector through the development and enforcement of a set of minimum standards for private schools and a national inspection of private schools in 2009, This process led to the closure of many private schools that were judged to be sub standard and requirements for improvement from others. The governance and self-regulation of private schools has also evolved with the formation of the Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA) a body that has essentially replaced PRISAM.

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At the time of the previous research, DFID and other major international development agencies were supporting efforts to abolish fees in school and make basic education free and compulsory for all. This research is set within an international debate about the role of the private sector and of fee charging for profit schools in expanding access to education. It is therefore timely and appropriate to illuminate changes in the private sector provision in Malawi, the extent to which this has contributed to expanding access to secondary education, opportunities for poor households, and the impact of changes on equity.

This research is funded by the Open Society Foundations, through their Privatisation in Education Research Initiative. It revisits the issue of private secondary schooling in Malawi by investigating what has happened to the sector some eight years after the first study. In particular, it aims to

map the development of private schools at secondary school level in Malawi, re-explore the policy and regulatory frameworks and analyse data on participation, achievement and affordability. This report presents the findings from this follow-up study.

Rationale

The purpose of secondary education is to provide its recipients with the knowledge, skills, and adaptability to enable them earn a living, contribute to national development goals, to survive in non-work environment, to participate in national affairs and pursue further education with this ability. Malawi enrols a small minority of its school age population in secondary schools. Growing numbers of children have graduated from primary schooling as a result of the free primary education policy meaning that demand for places in secondary schools has increased. The EMIS data shows that in 2002, the year the first FPE cohort graduated, there were 132,220 in standard eight, this number increased to 147,6134 in 2006. EMIS data shows that in the 2010 academic year, there were 202,036 pupils in Standard 8 but the 2011 EMIS indicated that only 71,000 26,316 of these were registered in Form 1 (the first year of secondary school) in the 2011 school year (MoEST Statistics various years). It is apparent that as efforts are made to improve the functioning of primary schools, and completion rates go up, more pupils will graduate from primary schools and the pressure for secondary schooling will increase. Chimombo (2009) observed that while success has been made on the primary school front, there has been less progress to increase access to secondary education in Malawi.

> Despite all the efforts made in recent decades in Malawi, secondary education remains a bottleneck for the expansion of educational attainment. Thus, while success has been made on the primary school front, much more needs to be done to increase access to secondary education in Malawi. ...While there are both the demand and supply impediments to accessing secondary education in Malawi, the resource implications for increasing access to secondary education are enormous. If all the primary pupils who enter primary school were to finish and transit to secondary school level, it would be impossible to accommodate them under the present conditions. Malawi is a long way to universal secondary education and this presents some kind of a paradox (Chimombo, 2009:60).

The competition for places reflects in part the critical importance of secondary schooling in Malawi in mediating entrance into the modern sector labour market. As is the case in other parts of Sub Saharan Africa, who goes to secondary school and how this affects poverty reduction, social equity, and economic development has become a key development issue. The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) (Government of Malawi, 2007), which is the guiding document for government, recognized the critical role of education. The MGDS stated that education enhances group solidarity, national consciousness and tolerance of diversity (MGDS 2006:50).

Non-state providers of education are seen by some as the solution to expanding educational access in developing countries. There is a broad literature on non-government providers of

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education in developing countries, which stretches back several decades. Recent literature includes several synthetic reviews (Heyneman et al. 2011; Patrinos et al. 2009; and HDRC, 2010), collections of case studies such as (Srivastava and Walford, 2007; Phillipson 2008) and publications commissioned by the Privatisation in Education Research Initiative (PERI). There are significant additions to this work from a recent DFID funded research consortium, the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) such as Lewin (2007) Rose (2007a; 2007b); Sabur and Ahmed (2010) and Härmä (2009; 2010; 2011). Much of this literature relates to multiple providers who are involved in education delivery alongside the state (Rose, 2007a; 2007b; Chimombo, 2009; Sabur and Ahmed 2010). Some of it enters into the debate around the political economy of non-state provision in providing Education for All, arguing that non-state providers may help the relatively wealthy but will not be 'the provider of last resort' for the poorest (Lewin 2007; Härmä 2011).

The current debate in the international literature is focused on what some contributors call 'low cost' private schools. There is no standard definition of low cost and this description is applied to schools with many different levels of cost in relation to GDP per capita, household income, and average costs in state schools (Nambissan, 2012. What is significant for the poorest is the price they have to pay, not the cost of the service to the provider. Private schools can appear to be low price and low cost to external observers unfamiliar with the economies of low-income countries and typical cost structures. What appears low price in dollar terms may be well beyond the reach of households in the poorer quintiles of income. In this research we eschew the terms low cost and low price but do link data on costs and prices to income distribution and GDP per capita to give a sense of magnitudes and affordability for the poor. This shows unequivocally that private for profit secondary schools in Malawi are too expensive to be accessed by the poor.

Private schools, which are the subject of this research are those run for profit rather than those established and run by not for profit non government organisations. The distinction is important since most recent interest has focussed on the expansion of the for profit sector. Charities, non-government organisations (NGOs) and religious organisations are important providers of education in many contexts. However, their diversity and the complex mix of motives alongside or instead of profit make them a different proposition to for-profit private schools (Rose, 2009). This research focuses only upon for profit private schools. The number of for profit private schools appears to be increasing from a low base in some poor countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is unclear what upper threshold to their growth is determined by affordability (Lewin, 2007; Noronha and Srivastava, 2013). Private schools that are fee paying and unsubsidised must charge fees sufficient to cover costs and this will always mean there is a threshold of affordability below which some households will find the charges too expensive to bear.

Private schools are perceived by many to be of better quality and higher status than government schools (De et al. 2002). Where there is differentiated demand for competitive advantage private sector schools are often marketed as "international" and or as English medium as selling points whether or not the claims can be realised. Studies in India, such as Tooley and Dixon (2005) argue that even very poor people, including dalits and adivasis are paying to send their children to for profit private schools, which are staffed by unqualified teachers, receiving very low wages though

their data has no independent corroboration. Other studies contradict this picture and provide evidence that the poorest remain excluded in India (Härmä 2011). Tooley's work in India and Ghana, argues that for profit, for profit private schools provide a systemic alternative to state education to extend education to poor and marginalized communities but provides no evidence that such systematic approaches exist on scale or are sustainable. The question remains as to whether the broader evidence can support this kind of ideologically driven advocacy, and whether it has any evidential base especially outside the special circumstances of areas that are densely populated with high proportions of displaced internal and cross border migrants lacking civil rights. In large part evidence on for profit schools in developing country is patchy, unconvincing, not independent of vested interests, or independently corroborated, much of it suffers from a number of obvious biases. For example, if data is collected from those who have already chosen private schools for their children, then perceptions are conditioned by the selection effects inevitable at asking parents to rationalise choices they have already made.

Proponents of private schooling in developing countries argue that private provision of public services such as education has the following principal benefits:

• Competition in the market for education leading to improved performance on achievement tests
• Autonomy in school management leading to more efficient use of resources
• Improved standards through performance related contracts for teachers
• Risk-sharing between government and providers (Patrinos et al. 2009).

Each of these claims is contentious. Competition challenges schools to match the performance of the best or risk losing students. Since all schools cannot improve relative to each other at the same time some schools will experience downward mobility in league tables alongside those that register improvements. Until the point is reached when unsuccessful schools close, competition may therefore increase differences between schools rather than reduce differences.

If schools are given increased autonomy in decision-making it is likely that differences between them will grow since it is an essential outcome of moving away from a centralised and standardised system. Though some schools may become more efficient through better localised cost management, others may make poor use of the resources they have because of a variety of factors including the lack of management capacity at local level, absence of economies of scale in procurement, and collusion and corruption as a result of weak supervision.

Performance related contracts the teachers may or may not improve levels of achievement of students. If payment is on a piece work basis where teachers are paid by the day or by the hour for time on task then it is likely that absenteeism will fall. Though it is of course possible that payment by results has an impact on teacher performance if pay is linked to exam outcomes this may have adverse effects on reducing the curriculum solely to that which is reflected in exam questions. Performance related bonuses motivate teachers but encourage 'teaching to the test' which can increase test scores in the short term but may not lead to sustained increased learning in the long run (Glewwe, Ilias and Kremer, 2010). This kind of incentive structure may also

deprofessionalise teachers who will have reduced incentives to develop higher and higher levels of skill within a career framework that rewards the cumulative development of skills.

Though the proponents of public and private partnerships often assert that one of their advantages is to share risk this is rarely true. More accurately the propositions generally result in public entities taking on risks that would otherwise be borne by private providers and providing guarantees. The state is the provider of last resort and the guarantor of rights to education. Most of the risks relate to the probability of financial loss, insolvency and inability to deliver services of failed private schools. These risks have to be covered by public assurances.

In this research we examine these claims for the benefits of private schooling further. Through an analysis of school locations, the socio economic background of pupils in for profit private schools and the fees charged in different types of private and public secondary schools we examine competition in the market for secondary education in Malawi. Through case studies of 15 for profit private schools we explore management structures and practices. Through an analysis of secondary data on performance (output), observations of infrastructure, standards and an analysis of teaching staff (inputs) in case study schools, we provide insights into standards and the quality of education. Through an exploratory analysis of the business model and financing of private schools as well as the regulatory framework, we explore whether there really is risk sharing, as well as the profitability and the governance of non-state providers. This study therefore contributes to the debate about the private provision of public services, specifically secondary schooling, in developing countries.

The simple divide between state and non-state providers of education is insufficient to capture the realities of variation in types of provision. It implies idealised relationships between principals and agents and often assumes efficient markets in school choice exist. While the extremes are clear, there is a large grey area in which public and private collaboration is common (Lewin, 2007; Chimombo, 2009). This is an area that this research will further develop by highlighting areas where public and private provision is blurred or mixed exogenously or endogenously; and as a deliberate open policy of public-private partnerships or couched in terms of general reforms but entailing 'hidden privatisation' (Ball and Youdell, 2007).

Background

Malawi has historically had very low rates of transition to and enrolment in secondary education. The sector has been historically concentrated on the provision of education to a very small proportion of the population. Thus, secondary education developed late in Malawi, because of little effort or neglect in secondary education throughout the colonial era and by the Banda administration. Most secondary teachers are qualified and hold either degrees or diplomas. However, the Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) have traditionally been staffed by teachers with primary school teaching qualifications. One of the biggest criticisms of secondary schools in Malawi is that they are too university-oriented and need more technical skills taught. Most students do not proceed to university and need a different orientation. Therefore, secondary schools do not produce the kinds of graduates the labour market demands.

In 1994 a new democratic government of Malawi inherited an education system with low enrolment and completion rates at primary level, and very low participation rates at secondary level. Few structural changes had been made since independence, and the private sector in education was very small. The core of the public system in secondary sector consisted of government funded boarding schools, government day schools (with much boarding partly financed by fees), and grant aided schools run mostly by denominational organisations to which capitation grants are paid by government. Government supported schools are now all called Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS). Thus, secondary schools in Malawi can be put in the following categories: Conventional Secondary Schools (CSS) Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs), Open Day Secondary Schools (ODSSs), and Private Secondary Schools. CDSSs account today for the majority of schools (55%) and enroll almost half of the students (47%). The remaining students found themselves in CSSs (26.5%) and private schools (22.8%). Recently, open secondary schools (a resemblance of the night schools), have become very popular but lack of regulation has meant that there is no clear picture as to magnitude of this system. According to the 2011 EMIS, there were 44 government boarding schools, 57 day secondary schools, 157 religious institutions, 527 CDSSs, only 62 open centres and 194 private schools.

Initially, secondary education was provided through the conventional school system with very few private schools. However, the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) was established in the mid-1960s essentially in an attempt to respond to the growing demand for secondary education. MCDE organized a large number of distance learning centres in which teachers' salaries were paid by government. The teachers were primary qualified teachers posted to the MCDE system and paid from the primary education budget allocation. Pupils paid fees that covered more than 60% of the costs of the centres. As distance learning centres, they operated at very high pupil teacher ratios of between 100:1 and 200:1. Some were organised in purpose built structures, some in buildings designed for other purposes, which happened to be available, and many functioned in primary school premises in the afternoons after regular pupils had finished school. The MCDE centres have been re-designated as Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). The long-term intention is to integrate them fully into the public system. As yet there is no practical way of achieving this within existing budgets, since this would imply greatly increased salary expenditure. In reality, many CDSS continue to operate with very high PTRs, and very few learning resources.

Malawi has had one of the lowest participation rates in secondary schooling in Africa. Primary level enrolments expanded from about 1.8 million to nearly 3 million as an immediate consequence of the introduction of free primary education after 1994. This increase in enrolments is beginning to be reflected in the number of primary completers seeking access to secondary schooling. Inevitably, increased flows through the primary system are lowering the transition rate into state secondary schools. Against this backdrop of limited supply and increased demand, the private sector of education in Malawi has grown rapidly at secondary level since 1994. Although EMIS reports of 194 private schools in 2011, it is possible that an unknown number are unregistered and invisible to the government statistics.

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In a tracer study of secondary school leavers and university graduates, Kadzawira (2003) analyses the labour market outcomes of education in Malawi. The study focused on Junior School Certificate (JCE) graduates, Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) graduates and University of Malawi graduates. The parents of the traced secondary school leavers were well educated, indicating that the majority of children in secondary education are from higher socio-economic backgrounds. The majority of the parents of secondary school leavers were from professional backgrounds, less than a fifth of secondary school leavers parents engaged in subsistence agriculture, which employed 90% of the population at the time (Kadzamira, 2003:19).

Exam performance is linked to the type of school attended, with the Conventional Government Secondary Schools (CSS) performing better than private schools and Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). Females performed worse than males in the exams, particularly in the CDSS. Most CDSS students do not pass the MSCE exams, which have become the minimum requirement for most formal sector jobs (Kadzamira, 2003:16). The incidence of private tuition among the sample of secondary school leavers was relatively low in both cohorts (9% in 1990 and 15% in 1995) (Kadzamira, 2003:25). A pass with unexceptional performance in the exam will prevent entry into the public university system, entry to which is selected based on exam results. Low performance by females in the MSCE exam means that there are less female students in the university (Kazamira, 2003:17). Exam performance is closely related to subsequent income, those that passed with credit or above in the MSCE exam had higher mean incomes than those who failed or who had an ordinary pass. Incomes were higher among waged employees than self-employed people (Kadzamira, 2003:54)

The study shows that the vast majority of male and female secondary school leavers in Malawi quickly find work, usually in waged employment, or in self employment (Kadzamira, 2003:14). Labour market outcomes are also related to school type, with CDSS students less likely than CSS and private school students to be in waged employment, and more likely to be self employed or unemployed (Kadzamira, 2003:16).

There is a significant rural to urban migration among the traced school leavers in the study. More than half of children who attended rural schools in 1990 and 1995 lived in urban areas by 2001. However, many of these students may have been boarding at rural schools rather than from rural based families. Nonetheless, there is a significant rural to urban migration pattern among secondary school leavers in search of waged employment in the cities (Kadzamira, 2003:18). Some of the sample also migrated abroad, principally to South Africa, but also to the UK and USA, often to pursue higher education (Kadzamira, 2003:19).

Arguments are put forward for non-government providers to set up schools to 'absorb the excess' of students who cannot secure access to the government sector and to increase standards by creating competition (Reference) . However, the reality in Malawi, and many developing countries, seems to be that it is not those who fall through the gaps of the government system who will be in non-government providers, but those with the greatest ability to pay. However, a substantial expansion of secondary schooling without non-government providers is not possible with Malawi's constrained budget (Lewin and Sayed, 2005:73).

In 2005 there was no clear policy on the growth or regulation of non-government schools or parts of the education system where there were significant public–private partnerships. The Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (MoEST 2001) included a specific aim of supporting good quality non-government secondary schools to complement public provision. The PIF envisaged 10% of primary and 25% of secondary student being educated by non-government providers by 2012. Lewin and Sayed point to significant gaps in the PIF, in terms of frameworks to develop, support, regulate, monitor and evaluate non-government providers (Lewin and Sayed, 2005:73).

Chimombo (2009) noted that there is need for a considered policy to steer the growth of the private sector. He observed that:

> … many things are currently going wrong in the government–private relationship. Government does not provide books to private schools, teachers are excluded from government activities, proprietors of private schools do not see their schools as educational institutions but rather as business entities, and PRISAM, the main regulatory body, is very weak (Chimombo, 2009:182).

The National Sector Education Plan (NESP 2008-2017) projects rapid increases in enrolment (50% increase from 2007 to 2012, and 130% increase from 2007 to 2017) in secondary schooling. This would be obtained by a 30% increase in enrolment in Government-supported schools to 2012 and 90% to 2017, an increase in enrolment in Open Schools from nearly 7,000 in 2007 to 19,000 in 2012 and 34,000 in 2017, and increases in private enrolment of 90% by 2012 and 230% by 2017 (NESP 2008:17). However, until such time as there is an effective engagement with the private sector and regulatory framework, it is difficult to see how private provision can be the answer to increasing access to quality secondary schooling in poor Malawi (Chimombo, 2009).

Government data shows rapid increases during the 1990s in secondary enrolments, peaking in 2000. From 2001 these rates began to fall as selective entry into Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) was introduced. Caution was urged in interpreting the data as its quality was known to be poor (Lewin and Sayed, 2005:79). Chimombo (2010) showed that secondary enrolment picked up with the introduction of the CDSS policy. This was probably in line with the increased numbers of secondary schools from 781 in 2003 to 1106 in 2006 (Chimombo 2010:35).

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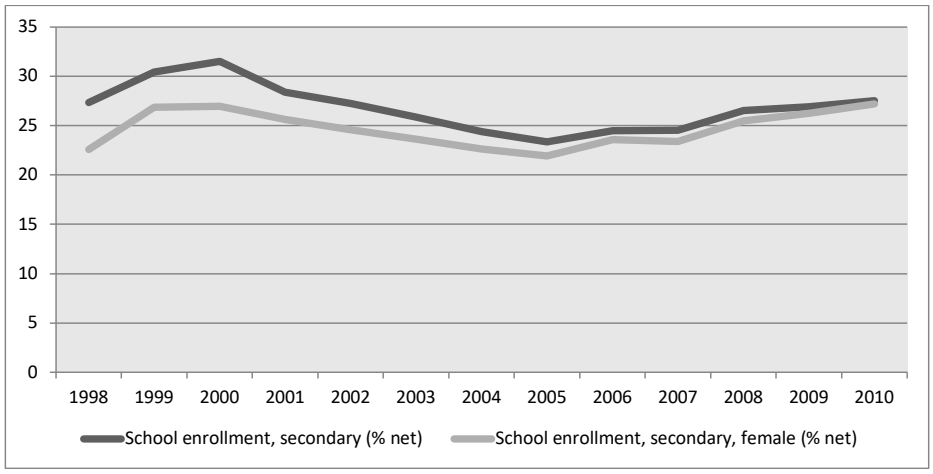
During the field visits, it was reported by a district officer that government data on private schools is not reliable, as after the 2009 crackdown by the government of private schools, many private schools refused to reply to district education management information system (DEMIS) questionnaires or submitted questionable data. Private school proprietors complained that the data they submitted might later be used to close them down so they refused to submit data. Data on non-government schools and enrolments in them is therefore known to be poor. While data on school registrations shows increasing numbers between 1993 and 2009, there is no data for example on how many schools have closed. One of the for profit private schools visited in the previous research was revisited and was found to have closed down in 2009, having been open

for nine years. Research in other contexts, indicates that for profit private schools often operate for quite short time periods (Harma, 2010).

Recent data on secondary Enrollments in Malawi from the World Bank shows several things (figure 1). Firstly it confirms the pattern observed by Lewin and Sayed (2005) that enrolments in secondary schools declined after 2000/2001. After increasing enrolments as a result of the 1994 liberation, secondary school participation declined reaching its lowest level in 2005. After 2005 a steady increase seems to have been driven by increases in female participation in secondary schools reaching virtual parity in 2010. Girls in all school types in Malawi performed worse than boys in the national MSCE exams in 2000 (Lewin and Sayed, 2005:86). Investigating changing patterns of girl's enrolment and performance was therefore one of the aims of this research.

Figure 1 Secondary net enrolment in Malawi



A Typology of Secondary schools

Four types of private schools can be identified based on fee levels as well as nature of ownership. First, are 'dwelling house schools' established in or adjacent to proprietors' homes; these have drastically reduced in number following the 2009 crackdown. These types of schools are often owned by private individuals who are petty business entrepreneurs. They are usually small, may have unstable enrolments and teachers who often have informal contracts, and have few if any resources.

Second, there are business entrepreneurs who own and run private schools in buildings that are purpose built. These schools, which we call for profit private schools have a range of normal

school facilities of varying quality. The costs and quality of these schools varies quite widely. The category includes very good schools operating efficiently, providing a good education for a reasonable price as well as schools, which are dirty and dangerous for learners and are clearly focused on maximizing profits rather than quality education. These schools also include day schools, boarding schools and mixed provision. This is the category of schools that we focus our study on.

Third, are mission and church owned and run private schools, which tend to be well established and reasonably equipped. These schools have reputations, which attract higher fee students and stable teaching forces with more normal employment contracts. Many of these schools are 'grant aided' meaning that a substantial proportion of running costs, usually teacher salaries, are provided by the state. The state also controls teacher recruitment and deployment. Some of these schools have opted out of the grant-aided arrangement and become wholly private, what we refer to as 'mission private', these usually operate at the high-cost, and high quality end of the spectrum of private schools.

Finally there are a small number of high cost, high quality, international private schools which attract both Malawian and foreign students and have excellent facilities and well paid, fully qualified teaching staff. Students in these schools often sit for British or International Baccalaureate exams and typically go to university outside Malawi.

These schools cater for those unable or unwilling to attend government secondary schools, but for very different reasons. In all categories of secondary school, including government secondary schools, fees must be paid. In the first two categories of private school described above, the students are mainly those who have failed to gain entrance into a competitive government secondary school or have some other reason for not wanting to attend. This might be that they are disillusioned with the quality of government schools, have had a bad experience in school and/or want to retake public examinations. In the upper two categories of private schools in Malawi the decision to go to a private school is probably motivated more by quality and social constraints, with the wealthiest sections of society choosing high cost elite education options. The following table summarises the categorisation of the secondary schools as used in this study

Table 1 Categorising school types

School Type/ Characteristics		Conventional	CDSS	Grant Aided	International private	For profit private	Mission Private	Dwelling House
Funding	State	✓	✓	✓				
	Non-state	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ownership	State	✓	✓					
	Non-state			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regulation	State	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

	Non-state				✓	✓	✓	✓

In interpreting this table, the following ought to be born in mind:

- There is not a very clear-cut distinction between private and public in terms of funding because even those within the government system charge fees.
- Grant aided schools are owned by missions and differ from mission private schools in that they receive grants from government while the mission private schools sorely rely on fees and external assistance.
- All schools regardless of type are supposed to register with government and government is supposed to regulate all schools except for the international schools.

Research Questions

This research is focused on educational provision in Malawi at the secondary level. It seeks to explore how the private sector has developed to meet rapidly growing demand for secondary education of different types, and to develop policy relevant insights based on evidence.

The broad research question is:

- What is the role of non-government providers in changing patterns of enrolment in secondary education in Malawi?

To answer this we proposed a number of sub-questions, building upon the previous research and international debates reviewed above:

1. How have policies, processes and practices of registration, regulation and governance of non-government schools changed since 2005?
2. Is there now better data on the number of non-government schools at primary and secondary level, enrolments in them and performance by their students?
3. If so:
    a. How are for profit private schools managed and run?
    b. How many non-government schools are registered and what proportion of the total is this estimated to be?
    c. How many non-government schools have closed or how long does the average non-government school operate for?
    d. What are the patterns of enrolment by gender?
    e. What are the pattern of performance by school type and gender?
    f. What are the patterns of location of private schools by urban / rural status or region?
    g. Do non-state providers of secondary education cater to the poor?

   h. What is the proportion of primary and secondary students being educated by non-government providers in 2013?
4. What types of public-private partnerships exist?
5. What is the infrastructure and standards like in for profit private schools?
6. What schools do for profit private schools compete with?
7. Who teaches in for profit private schools, under what conditions?
8. How are for profit private schools financed?

Methods

Building upon the previous research and a literature review, research consisted of case studies of 15 for profit private secondary schools as well as analysis of secondary data. The research was conducted jointly but managed in Malawi by CERT. Researchers at CERT were responsible for searching for and collecting recent data sets, where they exist. Researchers at CERT and CIE carried out analysis of these data sets jointly during visits to Malawi by Keith Lewin and Benjamin Zeitlyn.

Once these analyses were done, trends and patterns emerged from the data and these were investigated through interviews and case studies. Interviews fell into two groups. One group was with 'key informants' senior policy makers, education leaders and analysts. The second group was with teachers and head teachers in the 15 non-government schools. The use of different methods at different levels helps to triangulate findings and explain the trends identified in secondary data analysis.

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Schools included in case studies were contacted and asked to give their consent for participation in the research, and then visited. Each case study involved a number of research methods collecting school level data about enrolment, attendance, performance, teachers, facilities, ownership and financing. This data was complemented by interviews and focus groups with learners and teachers. This investigated the impacts and meaning of some of the secondary data trends and policies in real schools.

Case Studies methods and sampling

This study targeted for profit private secondary schools in three districts in Malawi, namely Zomba, Blantyre and Dedza. The districts were purposively sampled based on the enrolment rates of the districts. Blantyre district had the highest enrolment rate while Dedza district had the lowest enrolment rate in the country. Zomba district was conveniently sampled because it is where the research institution that carried out the study is located.

15 for profit private secondary schools were chosen from these three districts. These were defined as schools teaching Forms 1-4, that are entirely private, receiving no state subsidy or grant and not being allied to or supported by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), religious organisation or charity. Lewin and Sayed's (2005) research included higher cost private secondary

schools such as St Andrews and Kamuzu Academy in its sample. This study has excluded the higher cost private secondary schools including grant aided and elite private secondary schools and focussed on for profit private schools because for profit secondary schools are now the subject of debate about expanding access to education in developing countries. In order to enter into this debate about the role of non-state and private sector providers of education in developing countries we focused upon the for profit private schools that are said to be helping to expand access to the poor, raise standards and increase competition (Tooley and Dixon, 2005).

In addition to excluding high cost, grant aided and elite schools included in the previous study we have also not included the 'dwelling house schools'. This is because we did not encounter these schools in our current research. While previously, many private schools operated in the homes of their proprietors and in unsuitable buildings such as converted pubs (Kadzamira et al. 2006), most of these schools have been shut down in a government inspection in 2009.

We did try to include schools from the previous sample in the current research, but this was not possible in most cases because they fell outside our revised sampling criteria, were in other districts, or had closed down.

The case studies used a range of data collection methods. At each school, five instruments were used to gather data. This included:

- A school checklist that was administered to the head teacher
- Semi-structured interviews with two teachers
- Focus group discussions with selected boys and girls in Forms 1 and 4 and
- An observation guide or infrastructure checklist on the quality and condition of infrastructure as well as on the processes taking place at the school
- A questionnaire that was administered to all learners in Form 1 and Form 4

The school checklist that was administered to the head teachers collected quantitative data on issues of ownership and management of the school, admissions, enrolments, dropouts, learner migration, learner performance, teacher qualifications, teacher salaries, infrastructure and financial issues. Interviews with teachers focussed on soliciting their views on different aspects of the school. These included their reasons for teaching at the school, their salaries and conditions of work as well as the characteristics of learners at the school. In focus group discussions, qualitative data was gathered about the experiences of learners in the schools, their views on teaching and learning and on why they had chosen to study at the school. The infrastructure checklist helped to standardise the analysis of the buildings and facilities in schools

The learner questionnaire was designed to elicit quantitative data on the socio-economic background of learners as well as the schooling history of family members. It also collected data on the level of provision of textbooks and furniture to learners. At each sampled school, all Form 1 and Form 4 learners were asked to respond to the questionnaire. The Form 1 learners were targeted because we felt they could give an objective impression of the school, as they were relatively new at the school while the Form 4 learners were included in the sample of respondents because of their wider experiences about what goes on at the school. In addition it was felt that

the experiences and views of Form 1 and Form 4 learners might be different. In each class, research assistants helped the learners to fill in the questionnaire by clarifying any confusion with the questions to ensure accuracy and completeness of the questions.

Total respondents to the learner questionnaire from the 15 sampled schools in the three districts were 998 of which 507 were boys while 491 were girls, 507 respondents were from Form 4 and 491 were from Form 1 (Table XXX). Thus there was little difference in enrolment in Form 1 and Form 4 suggesting that there had not been significant growth over the last four years.

Table 2 Respondents to the learner questionnaire

	Form 1	**Form 4**	**Total**
Boys	239	268	507
Girls	252	239	491
Total	**491**	**507**	**998**

The gender balance of the sample was fairly even. Although there were slightly more girls in Form 1 than boys and slightly more boys than girls in Form 4, the differences were not statistically significant.

Research Process

The two principal researchers were involved in the data collection, along with four research assistants. Initially the principal researchers conducted a desk review or document analysis of some literature around private secondary education provision and held key informant interviews. This process assisted in developing the criteria for identifying schools to be included in the sample as well as in the development of relevant instruments for capturing reliable information on private secondary education. Then the schools were informed of the aims of the study and appointments were made to visit them.

The visits started with schools in Zomba district, then Blantyre and finished with schools in Dedza district. The research team split into two teams comprising one principal researcher and two research assistants in each team. At each school the team introduced itself to the head teacher and made logistical arrangements for the data collection process at the school. The research assistants administered the learner questionnaire to all the learners in Form 1 class and one Form 4 class. Thereafter the research assistants conducted separate focus group discussions with selected learners from the two forms. The learners were selected randomly from the class and constituted five boys and five girls from each class. Focus groups for boys and girls were held separately, so in each case study school, four focus groups were held: Form 1 boys, Form 1 girls, Form 4 boys and Form 4 girls.

The principal researcher administered the school checklist to the head teacher and conducted interviews with the teachers. The data collection excise at the school ended with a 'look around' of the school premises and environment to determine its conduciveness to the teaching and

learning process and completing the infrastructure checklist. The whole data collection process at each school took place in one day.

The principal researchers then constructed a profile of each case study school. Chapter 5 of this report is based on insights across the different school profiles drawing attention to important similarities and differences. Condensed case study accounts are included in Annex 1.

Limitations of the study

There were a number of challenges, which presented limitations in the study. The number of cases that could be covered was constrained by time, resources, and geographic location. This meant that the small sample chosen for case studies cannot be regarded as representative.

While some information about private schools, such as their fees are widely publicised, others are kept quiet. There is sensitivity in the sector as a result of a crackdown on unregistered schools that were operating in very poor quality premises with unqualified teachers that took place in 2009. This has led to reluctance on the part of school owners to divulge information about the level of qualification of teachers and the number of teachers, including the salaries they receive as the Ministry of Education now uses these as minimum requirements for establishing a school. The finances of schools are shrouded in secrecy, many proprietors use their own personal bank accounts for school finances, do not appear to keep accurate records of financial transactions, deal mainly in cash and there do not appear to be any audited accounts available.

This made it difficult to calculate the actual income and expenditure of the schools; nevertheless rough estimates of income and expenditure were made from the data that was collected. In some of the case study schools staffing and learner enrolment was unstable with considerable changes from year to year. In some schools data and records were not kept properly and/or were unavailable. This made it difficult to construct a picture over time of trends in areas such as enrolment and performance. Lastly, self-reported performance data often seemed unreliable and exaggerated to give a favourable impression of achievements especially in cases where tangible documentation was not available. Where possible we have triangulated data given to us by schools with exam board, EMIS, University of Malawi and observational data.

Secondary Data analysis

Secondary data analysis focused on five databases using them in combination with each other and the learner survey to examine some of the research questions. These were:

- Malawi EMIS 2011 and 2012
- Malawi DHS 2010
- MANEB data from 2002-2012
- University of Malawi entrance data from 2010
- ISAMA membership data

Using these databases we have done mainly descriptive analysis to highlight trends and patterns of enrolment and performance in Malawi.

In analysing the secondary data, several procedures were followed. The EMIS data was either taken directly from the various annual reports or analysed with SPSS. The MANEB data underwent two types of recording. The data with grades by subject was recorded into four categories of 1 for distinction (1-2), 2 for credit (3-6), 3 for pass (7-8) and 9 for fail. Secondly, based on MANEB coding, we were able to record the files with the total number of entrants (JCE and MSCE) into three categories. These were internal, external and open or ODL. Finally, in order to categorize entrants to the University of Malawi, each student's school was coded by school type for analysis.

Chapter 2: Review of Policy and Practice on Secondary Schooling

Introduction

This chapter gives a brief history of secondary schooling in Malawi. It reviews policy developments since independence, focusing upon policy documents that have shaped the development of secondary education since democratisation in 1994.

The legal framework of education in Malawi is based on the 1962 Education Act. Malawi's constitution defines the nation's educational objectives and regulates the sharing of responsibilities for education among the three key players – the state, religious groups and the private sector. Religious groups control a large proportion (about 60%) of the primary schools, and many secondary schools. About 25% of schools are conventional government schools, 49% are Community Day Schools 25% are private with less than 1% registered as open schools. The broad policy on education is to develop an "efficient" and high quality system of education of a type and size appropriate both to the available resources and to the political, social and economic aspirations of the nation. A number of documents describe the development goals and strategies for national development and/or education development in Malawi. Some of these documents are: Vision 2020 (Vision 2020, 2001), Poverty reduction Strategy Paper (GoM, 1995), the Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (MoE, 2005), the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) (NESP, 2007), the Decentralization policy and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) (MGDS, 2007). While the Vision 2020 is a long-term policy in the light of expectations of Malawi by 2020, the other documents address policy issues from a perspective of experiences and lessons of the past situation. All these policies attempt to balance carefully issues of rights and responsibilities and public concern. In the sections that follow, only key policies are discussed.

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The Pre-Independence era

Schooling in Malawi dates back to the colonial era and indeed to the work of the early missionaries. With the arrival of the Free Church of Scotland at the Livingstonia Mission at Cape Maclear, the first primary school was founded in 1875. By 1910, there were already 1,051 schools in the country. The majority of these schools were elementary or village schools under the charge of African teachers supported by Europeans from the headquarters of the missions. The policy of the missions was to use the school as an auxiliary to the church. There was a great tendency towards religious bias in the mission's curriculum. The Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1924 commented that the supervision, which the missionaries carried out in their schools, was more for religious than education purposes (Pachai 1973). Thomas (1925) of the Phelps-Stokes Commission reported that although Malawi, then Nyasaland, had immense possibilities, it was the poorest colony in Africa. One of the reasons for the poverty, it said, was poor internal and external transport facilities. The report further observed that:

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The second reason for the condition of Nyasaland is the failure of government to organise and correlate the splendid work of the missions with the various phases of colonial life. Missions have been permitted to struggle alone in their respective fields.... there has been no Department nor Director of education to confer with the missions, to encourage them in their work, nor to help them relate their influences to each other or to colonial needs (Thomas, 1925:215-216)

Thus, until 1926, when the first government Department of Education was set up, the colonial administration played only a peripheral role in education, allowing each missionary group to design curricula for its own schools and examine its own students without any standardisation across agencies. This neglect was to persist well into independence and is responsible for many of the present problems of education in Malawi. This tardy provision of education left Malawi without sufficient adequately trained people to hold responsible positions in the civil service when independence was declared in 1964.

> The emphasis after independence on secondary and post-secondary education, over basic education, was therefore justified by the need to meet a wide range of manpower needs in both the public and private sectors. Secondary education provided an essential base from which these manpower needs would be met (OPC, 1971:93).

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what is OPC? – include in list of acronyms

The Post-independence Era

The post-independence era needed an education system that could accommodate the new aspirations of an independent state. These new aspirations included an expanded primary school system, a larger secondary and tertiary education sector, as well as some vocational education for producing the much-needed skilled manpower to replace the departing expatriates. Other aspirations were those of nationhood, national cohesion and group solidarity in addition to the production of middle and top-level management personnel to develop and manage the national economy.

The first attempt to formalise such attempts was the Johnson report of 1964, which included recommendations and general guidelines for the development of education in Malawi. The main message in this report was that education in developing countries was imported, excessively academic, deadeningly passive and addicted to rote learning, which was as a result of internal proficiency that had not yet come and external dynamics which still lingered (Johnson 1964:14). The report recommended among other things, the raising of entry qualifications to primary teacher education and for an expansion of secondary education. These recommendations influenced the first education development plan of 1973-80

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The First Education Plan

The first education plan was a product of the Johnson (1964) Report, which among other things recommended an expansion of secondary education. Self-rule in Malawi from 1966 onwards tied education, particularly at post-primary level, to the current demands of the labour market rather than to the demands created by population growth, or by future needs related to medium term

development strategy. For example, the education plan nine years after independence was very cautious of a rapid increase in post primary education as it observed:

> There is the danger that too rapid expansion can lead to a fall in standards. There are basically three reasons which support this hypothesis; (1) the entry standard is likely to be lowered, (2) a too rapid expansion will more than often result in the recruitment of poorly qualified or unqualified teachers and (3) the construction capacity might be inadequate to cope with the expansion programme, thus resulting in overcrowding and the associated adverse effects on the internal efficiency of the system (Malawi Government 1973:53)

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In justifying its position, the 1973 plan noted "the quality of education will vary inversely with the rate of expansion". This concern remains very current. After a decision was made to liberalise the secondary sector in 1994 and allow more private participation, complaints continued about the declining quality of education. Initially, the pressure for expansion was largely absorbed by growth in the MCDE system, which was also of low quality (Rose 2005, Chimombo 2009).

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The first education plan was limited in that it did not cover all levels of the formal education system. The 1973-80 plan was, however, useful as a first real attempt to plan a modern education system for the country. During the mid-1980s, there was some evidence that the 1973-80 education plan did not help the education personnel to establish and run an efficient and qualitative system of education. The reasons were not clear because there was no deliberate attempt to evaluate the plan at the end of its life. Mwale believes that the plan started with flaws. 'There was no specific budget for the implementation of the plan, the system managers were not able to plan and probably there was lack of uniform approach to educational theory, practice and development among key players' (Mwale 1998:xv).

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The Second Education Plan

The second education plan 1985-95 (EDPII) began to shift the emphasis away from post-secondary education in favour of primary education. It sought to improve access, quality and efficiency, particularly at the primary level. At the primary level, the target set in EDPII was to achieve a net enrolment ratio by 1995 of 85%. This was to be achieved by a gradual phasing out of school fees, but by 1993/94, the GER estimated at 70% was never close to this target. At the secondary level, the aim of the EDPII was to keep secondary school education opportunities geared to serving economic development rather than responding to the demand for secondary education. The 1985-1995 education plan also stated that:

> Secondary education opportunities will remain geared towards serving economic development rather than social demand. This means that there will continue to be limited access to full time secondary education for primary school leavers (Republic of Malawi 1985:5).

However, just like the first education plan, EDPII did not have the financial resources and project monitors to facilitate its successful implementation. Its evaluation indicated that quality, efficiency and access did not significantly improve. A shortage of teachers and learning materials and high dropout and repetition rates greatly affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the system (Mwale and Chimombo, 1994).

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The Malawi Vision 2020

The Vision 2020 (2001) was developed as a tool for setting priorities for development and management. It emphasised long-term strategic thinking, a shared vision and a visionary leadership, participation by the population, scenario planning, strategic management and national learning. Hence it was centred on a multi-sectoral approach to development and placed in a broad societal context. The essence of the vision was to examine factors strategically to determine what and where Malawi's national competitive advantages were to be. So the Vision 2020 was a shared one with all sectors and was forward looking. The Malawian vision stated that:

> By the year 2020, Malawi as a God-fearing nation, will be secure, democratically mature, environmentally sustainable, self-reliant with equal opportunities for and active participation by all, having social services, vibrant cultural and religious values and a technologically driven middle-income economy (Vision 2020, 2001).

To attain this vision Malawians had a series of goals to reach. The goals were good governance, sustainable economic growth and development, a vibrant culture, a well-developed economic infrastructure, food security and nutrition, science and technology-led development, social sector development, a fair and equitable distribution of income and wealth and sustainable natural resources and sound environmental management. The social sector development goal was seen as the pillar for the vision to stand on, since it defined and detailed the education aspirations of Malawians in an environment where education was regarded as the catalyst for national development.

The Vision documents stated that improving education should be done by:

- Better access for all (gender, able and disable and social groups) to all levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary/higher education);
- Efficient management and better support
- Increase in number of institutions, related materials and human resources in all education institutions and at specific standard, form and year;
- Adequate funding and its related efficient usage
- Working together of all stakeholders in education (community, NGOs and government
- Efficient management and better support
- Cost saving measures such as textbooks revolving funds and preventive maintenance measures

- Reviewing the Education Act. (Vision 2020, 2001)

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It can be noted that the Vision 2020 was broader than other plans and included issues such as free and compulsory primary and secondary education as well as a review of the Education Act. The vision also included the idea of working together with non-government stakeholders in education, but does not explicitly mention the private sector.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)

While the Vision 2020 was general in many respects, the PRSP provided specifics on poverty alleviation. It started by describing the poverty situation in Malawi, which as of 2002 showed that 65% of the people were below the poverty line. Whilst the PRSP highlighted the main causes of poverty stemming from a variety of factors, including constraints to land, labour and capital, it stated that the keys to PRSP were to enhance and sustain pro-poor growth; human capital development; improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable social groups and encourage good governance. In addition, the PRSP identified other measures related to critical crosscutting issues including HIV/AIDS, gender, the environment and science and technology.

It should be pointed out that while there had been every effort to make sure that PRSPs be formulated with extensive involvement of the local stakeholders, the problem was that the World Banks' considerable resources were aimed narrowly at pre-determined targets and foci and thus it limited the scope of government programmes that might otherwise be included (Ilon 2002:482). Commenting on this aspect, formulators of the PRSP in Malawi had this to say:

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> There is often an underlying assumption on the part of development partners that because they are benevolent donors, everything they do is in the best interests of Malawians and they are above criticism. However, the reality is that at best, donors do not effectively use their resources for poverty reduction, and at worst help to exacerbate poverty by undermining Government's planning and priority setting. (Ilon, 2002:93)

The people formulating the PRSP went further to say that the preparation of the PRSP basically involved three stages. These were mobilisation, preparation and validation processes. The three stages were aimed at: building broad Malawian ownership of the MPRS; building consensus on MPRS in order to enhance likelihood to policy adoption, implementation and sustainability; to ensure donor "buy in" to MPRS and to meet donor requirements (GoM, 1995:143).

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The Free Primary Education Policy (FPE)

The new democratic government of Malawi took a solid and courageous step and introduced FPE in 1994. The previous government had, in accordance with the Jomtien Declaration which made explicit the commitment of each country to provide education for all, introduced a school fee waiver scheme during the second half of the EDPII period. However, after winning the elections in 1994, the UDF-led government followed through on its political promise to provide education

for all Malawians. In this major policy intervention, the fees abolished included tuition, school fund/extra fees and textbook contribution. In some cases, especially in urban areas, it also meant the abolition of other fees such as telephone and water fees. A uniform no longer became a requirement for attending school (MoE, 1996). The policy also contemplated the introduction of community schools in order to cater for children in Standards 1-4. The FPE policy also merged into one category assisted (those under the responsibility of local education authorities at the district level) and unassisted schools (those established by local communities). The central government with the support of other sectors, assumed the responsibility of financing these schools (MoE, 1995).

In its educational philosophy as contained in the policy and strategy for poverty alleviation (GOM 1995), the government's main purpose was to improve the lives of its people by empowering them with education. Education was here seen as central to sustainable poverty reduction through economic growth with equity (World Bank, 1995). The major assumption was that by improving access to and quality of primary education, the policy would, *ceteris paribus*, contribute to poverty reduction. It should be pointed out that FPE marked the beginning of the change in the schooling landscape in Malawi. Overall, access to primary education increased and consequently, there was to be an associated demand for secondary and other levels of schooling.

Policy and Investment Framework (PIF)

The PIF (MoE, 2005) was education's response to the Government of Malawi's policy of poverty alleviation and addressed the national educational goal as spelt out in Vision 2020. It realised that an educated populace can best exploit Malawi's rich natural resource base and participate in a democratic society, be fully aware of its cultural heritage and the need to further develop its culture. The PIF also appreciated the fact that Malawi's education system could not contribute significantly to the alleviation of poverty unless the main constraints facing the system were addressed. Although significant policy changes had been made in the past decades, they were in most cases partial and aimed at redressing problems inherited from the past and rarely sought to address the educational challenges of the future.

The development of a sector-wide Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) for education in 1995 created the first opportunity to begin to profile how to support expanded access. The PIF also included a specific aim to support good quality private provision of secondary education as a complement to public provision (MoE, 2005). Specifically, the PIF stated that:

> The Education Act will be revised with the aim of accommodating cost-sharing and private initiatives with regard to educational provision at all levels of the education system (p. 20)

and that:

> The necessary policy environment will be provided to encourage participation of non state actors in the provision of secondary education (p.21)

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The document further elaborated on the extent to which private education development was to be opened to market forces. It envisaged that by 2012 10% of primary students and 25% of secondary students will be in the private sector. The change in attitude of government towards private education was significant. It clearly recognised that it would not on its own meet the increased demand for secondary education.

It became increasingly evident in the pre-FPE era (when a lot of donors became involved in education) that the various support provided to education development had not produced the desired impact because a well-conceived and comprehensive policy framework and co-ordination had not been put in place. As a result of these concerns, a PIF for education was formulated. Although the idea of a PIF started before FPE, the PIF came to be one of the strategies for the implementation of the policy. It was intended to spell out government policy, priority programmes, and through the linked Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), budgets for these programmes within the available financial resource package. Thus, through this document:

> MoE was supposed to define its educational policies and outline its priority programmes, while providing indicative figures for the finance required to implement these programmes. This was to be seen as a working document to be updated as circumstances changed and hopefully improved (MoE, 1998:1).

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A review of the initial PIF by the Government of Malawi and donors revealed that the document was not based on thorough and comprehensive data and analyses (Kirby et al. 1998). In essence, the PIF's review conceptualised education as a sector in need of a long-term development strategy; which required a systematic, programme level approach and guided interventions from donor supported projects. This would require the sector to have effective, investment, management and monitoring mechanisms.

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Bernbuam et al. (1998) observed further that although a great deal of effort during the development of the PIF went into developing a set of budget scenarios outlining the consequences of different decisions on funding requirements for education, the Government of Malawi declined to utilise these projections and make the hard choices they implied. One of the major differences in the second version of the PIF and indeed from the previous two education development plans was the emphasis that:

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> Education does not take place in a vacuum. Behind every suggestion for more education or different priorities in education, there are a number of implications with regard to socio-economic factors, the curriculum and the finances to support that education... the context should be as explicit as possible if the policies, strategies and programs described in this document are to be fully understood and appreciated (GOM, 1998:2).

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While the PIF recognised the importance of understanding the context in which planning takes places, it still suffered from the common problem characteristic in Malawi education planning: it only described the broad sector and sub-sector goals and policy areas. As pointed out by Kirby et

al. (1998), while providing useful descriptive information about the system, the PIF failed to tell a compelling story about the current status of the education sub-sector.

To provide the quality implied by the policy and standards in the PIF, required, over time, at least a doubling of current per/pupil expenditures. While the PIF wholly subscribed to the philosophy of the medium term expenditure framework (MTEF), it was difficult to see how the objectives set forth in the PIF could be achieved within this philosophy. The level of funding for the PIF policies was always constrained by the financial ceilings set by the MTEF.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS)

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) (Government of Malawi, 2007), which is the guiding document for government policy, recognises the critical role of education. The MDGS stated: "Education enhances group solidarity, national consciousness and tolerance of diversity" (MGDS 2006:50). The second MGDSII (GoM, 2011), recognized the role of an educated population as a necessity for sustainable development. It is through the provision of education that people acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to actively participate in socio-economic activities. The MGDS II stated that:

> Education is essential for social-economic development and industrial growth. It is an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless as it provides them with equal opportunity to participate in local and national development. It is through education that group solidarity, national consciousness and tolerance of diversity is enhanced (GoM, 2011:41).

The MGDS II identified nine key priority areas from the themes which are necessary to achieve rapid economic growth and improvement in the well-being of Malawians within the implementation period. The key priority areas are: Agriculture and Food Security; Energy, Industrial Development, Mining, and Tourism; Transport Infrastructure and Nsanje World Inland Port; Education, Science and Technology; Public Health, Sanitation, Malaria and HIV and AIDS Management; Integrated Rural Development; Green Belt Irrigation and Water Development; Child Development, Youth Development and Empowerment; and Climate Change, Natural Resources and Environmental Management. The MDGSII noted that rapid development in all sectors of the economy will require highly skilled and educated workforce, and the application of science and technology.

The National Education Sector Plan (NESP)

Malawi has developed a National Education Strategic Plan (NESP), in collaboration with international development partners, to stipulate the MoE's vision, mission, strategic objectives and core values. According to the NESP, the vision for the education sector is to be a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and instrument for empowering the poor, the

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weak and voiceless. The mission of education, according to the NESP, is to provide quality and relevant education to the Malawian nation (MoEST, 2008). Such education should enable people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to perform effectively as citizens, workforce and as leaders of Malawi, thereby reduce poverty amongst the people of Malawi. The rationale for the Strategic Plan is:

- Need to comply with central government demands that every ministry should have a Strategic Plan.
- Need for an implementation plan to guide the execution of PIF as a Sector Development Programme
- Need to recognise the importance of planning for change and managing change in the light of Vision 2020, MTEF, PRSP and decentralization; and
- Need to define the role of MoE in the 21st century bearing in mind the demand put upon education.

The NESP outlines sector-wide educational development for a ten-year period (2008-2017). To realize the vision and mission of MoE, and in accordance with these strategic priorities, the education sector has defined three thematic areas of intervention during the ten-year period of the current National Education Sector Plan (2008 – 2017), namely:

- Expand equitable access to education to enable all to benefit,
- Improve quality and relevance of education to reduce drop-out and repetition and promote effective learning, and
- Improve governance and management of the system to enable more effective and efficient delivery of services.

The National Education Sector Plan (NESP) draws on the first and second education development plans, the PIF and the Long-term Development Perspective for Malawi (Vision 2020). Subsequent to these development policies, it is also drawn from the current medium – term national development strategy (The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy). Furthermore, the NESP reflects the Government of Malawi's commitment to both regional (Southern African Development Community and the African Union) and international (the Millennium Development Goals) targets and priorities, and it incorporates the ideals of Education For All (EFA) and the National Plan of Action. The NESP operationalizes the MGDS broad education development priorities.

NESP consolidates education sector development strategies and their policies into one implementable output and results based framework with linkages to existing financing mechanisms and allowance for future reviews. In order to accomplish the strategies the MoEST has developed an intermediate plan called Education Sector Implementation plan (ESIP) (2009-2013) guide for the articulation of the broad development objectives of the NESP strategy in the next 5 years. The ESIP is an operational tool for all managers and implementers at every level of the education system. It serves as an important instrument for monitoring implementation.

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Alternative forms of secondary schooling in Malawi

The first education plan (1973-1980) implemented after Malawi attained independence, prioritised secondary school education. The main objective for this arrangement was to provide middle-level manpower to fill posts left by the colonial government (Rose and Kadzamira, 2001). Despite these government efforts, access to secondary education for the relevant age group had remained severely limited. An alternative mode for delivering secondary education had to be identified. The Malawi Government responded to this demand by establishing the Malawi Correspondence College (MCC) in 1965 so that those who could not be accommodated in the limited CSSs could have access to secondary school education through correspondence courses. The Malawi Correspondence College (MCC) was established in 1964 and with Distance Education Centres (DECs). DECs were run as part of the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) that replaced the MCC in 1980. The aims of MCDE were to provide an alternative for the secondary school age population who could not be accommodated. The MCDE depended on three models of instruction, namely: printed materials, radio broadcasts and audiotapes available at designated MCDE Centres.

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The Government's aim was to make these DECs an alternative route for the provision of secondary education, and originally the target was to enrol only nine percent of primary graduates (MoE, 2000). After twenty years of involvement in distance education, the government realized that, in reality, distance education offered a relatively inexpensive secondary education but was not necessarily cost-effective (MoE 1999). Although the MCDE programme was originally envisaged as a correspondence programme for both primary and secondary education, by the late 1990s, more than 80% of their students enrolled for subjects offered by the formal secondary school system. In recognition of this demand for formal secondary educational opportunity by a large number of Malawians, DECs were converted to CDSSs in 1998. The intention was to upgrade CDSSs with a view to having a unified national system of secondary school education provision. Such a policy was not without a price. DECs were constructed by communities, with provision for some poorly constructed classrooms, and were staffed by primary school teachers paid by the government. But DECs, were converted to conventional secondary schools without being provided with relevant physical infrastructure; teaching/learning facilities and the required qualified teaching force.

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The CDSS policy reform

The Ministry of Education directed the conversion of DECs to Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS) in January 1999. The Ministry of Education (MoE) in a circular released in December, 1998 stipulated the objectives of the policy reform as to improve *access* to *quality* secondary school education offered to the masses and to improve *community participation* in the management of secondary school education in Malawi in line with what is contained in the education sector Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) (1995). The ultimate wish of the government was to create a unified secondary education system in which equal access to quality education could be

guaranteed (MOE, 1999). In this policy statement, the Ministry of Education stated a number of issues:

1) All DECs would from now onwards be called CDSSs
2) The Ministry would begin the process of deploying diploma and graduate teachers to CDSSs.
3) In future the CDSSs that are in close proximity to an existing Conventional Secondary School (CSS) may be merged with the CSS to form one school.
4) CDSSs operating in borrowed premises would be given a maximum period of three years to construct their own premises or else they would be phased out.
5) The Ministry of education through the Division Offices would approve the establishment of new CDSSs. The permission to open a CDSS would be granted only after the standards set by the Ministry are strictly followed.
6) The ministry of education using their catchments area will select form one pupils to these CDSSs.
7) CDSSs will be day schools. Any existing boarding facilities will be phased out. (MOE, 1999)

The aim of this policy was to bring DECs into the mainstream of secondary education. However, it has become clear that CDSSs are given a lower status when compared to their counterparts in CSSs (Chinseu-Moyo, 2008). Gwede (2004) conducted a study to examine if the implementation of this policy ensured improvement of quality education in CDSSs. The results of the study showed that CDSS were lacking qualified teachers, libraries and laboratories and had poor infrastructure. Another study was conducted by Mac Jessie-Mbewe (2004), who wanted to better understand students', teachers' and parents' perspectives of the conversion of DECs to CDSSs, and student access to secondary education. The study reported that most of the teachers in CDSS were not qualified and that teaching and learning materials were not available, contributing to poor quality education in these schools.

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Another study conducted by Chakwera (2002) on teachers' and parents' perceptions of the secondary education unification policy also concluded that the status of CDSSs was lower than that of CSSs. This was also confirmed by one of the focus group discussions with teachers as they observed:

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> Very few pupils go to national or boarding secondary schools here. Parents here do not like their pupils being selected to CDSS. They do not see any difference between being in primary and being in CDSS because they still see them around.

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It would appear that although efforts were made to improve secondary education through the unification policy, the poor and uneven implementation of the policy has meant that CDSSs are not near the conventional secondary schools in terms of quality (Chinseu-Moyo, 2008). Parity in the eyes of the public implies that the schools should be exactly the same with the same structures and operating in the same manner. Many of the private schools we visited appear to compete directly with local CDSSs. The limited capacity and low quality of CDSS, which educate

the majority of Malawian secondary school students, drives demand for private schooling in Malawi.

The open school system

Open school system is a 'newly' developed parallel system to the provision of secondary education in Malawi. They are run using the existing structures of an already existing secondary school. In an interview, the regional manager of the system explained that the open school system is not new:

> They have their origin from night schools. With the conversion of MCDEs into CDSS, night schools were still left with MCDE which changed them into open school to move with time (Chimombo 2010).

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The interview further revealed that:

> Demand for an open school come from the community who apply for its opening. The requirement is that we came up with minimum conditions of at least 3 diploma teachers at a school and that a schools should have moderate to good infrastructure (Chimombo 2010)

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In an interviews, one of the division managers concurred with this when he said:

> For the open school system, the procedure is there. We endorse the forms, which are sent to us from schools, and we send the endorsed forms to MCDE (Chimombo 2010).

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EMIS data indicate that there were 12,879 learners in ODSS in 2011, although only 1,265 ODSS students sat for their MSCE and 894 for the JCE in that year according to MANEB data. Chimombo (2010) reveals that there are a lot of teething issues in the operation of ODSS. Open Day Secondary Schools attract extra income to teachers (because teachers are paid per hour) and therefore there is tendency "to hide the real numbers of students involved" (Chimombo, 2010). This was also confirmed by one of the officers from the Planning Unit at headquarters who was also interviewed. He observed that:

> Open schools operate in secret to the extent that it is very difficult to get the real coverage of the system. Almost every secondary school has an open school but very few respond to the annual questionnaire to indicate how many students they have.

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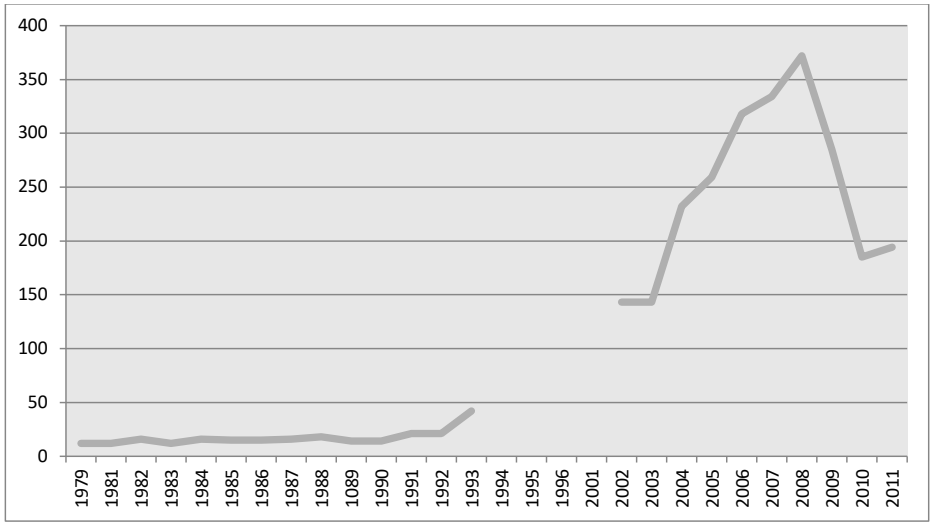
According to the regional manager, the open school system is a very viable system if only it was supported in terms of capacity development, supervision and filing of the many vacant positions. He reported that the political will is also lacking. "Just imagine, there is no desk officer at headquarters and the principal is still at P7" (Chimombo, 2010). There was general consensus that the management and administration of the open school system needs to be improved for it to offer a viable solution to the expansion of secondary education in Malawi.

Private schools in Malawi and the Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA)

After democratization in 1994, and the change in policy that saw the conversion of all MCDEs into CDSSs, there has been an increase in the number of private schools owned by individuals. This development of private schools has changed the map of secondary schooling in Malawi. However, most are for-profit institutions and there is much concern about quality (Lewin and Sayed 2005; Chimombo 2009). Figure (XXX) shows the growth of private schools. Note that the number of schools does not necessarily track the number of children enrolled. Many private schools are smaller than government schools. Note also that the chart shows the number of schools registered and does not indicate the level of turnover with schools opening and closing.

The decrease in the number of private schools after the government inspection of 2009 is notable. It is likely that this decrease is driven both by actual closures of schools that did not meet the minimum standards and by private schools refusing to reply to EMIS questionnaires in protest at government regulation.

Figure 2 Number of private schools in Malawi



Source EMIS and MANEB data

ISAMA – the Independent Schools Association of Malawi, was formed in 2009 after a power struggle in the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM), which ousted the president who had been accused of corruption. The corruption scandal involved the purchase of computers from the UK. The computers were paid for by PRISAM members but then failed to arrive or were

of very poor quality when they did arrive. The president was alleged to have taken the money for computers but not purchased them or used the best computers for his own computer-training academy. PRISAM became unpopular and divided due to the corruption scandal. The British Council had been supporting PRISAM but withdrew support after the corruption scandal[1]. The new president decided to change the name to ISAMA as the PRISAM name was tarnished by the corruption scandal, and to emphasise the notion of 'independent' schools rather than 'private' schools, as it "takes away the spirit of making a huge profit". ISAMA is also modelled on the South African equivalent The independent schools Association of South Africa (ISASA).

According its data, ISAMA has about 360 secondary school and 370 primary school members (although this figures is at odds with the EMIS data that the Ministry of Education collects). The association offers advice to private school owners and head teachers, a measure of regulation, networking opportunities, advocacy on behalf of private schools, and AIDS clubs in schools. However, ISAMA's main challenge is how to consolidate the private sector and be seen once again as the regulatory body that PRISAM was. Some proprietors of the private schools we visited indicated that they viewed ISAMA as a rebel organisation and considered themselves as still belonging to PRISAM.

The number of private schools went down dramatically after a national inspection of private schools and the closing down of private schools that did not meet minimum standards set by the ministry in 2009. The Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS) of the Ministry of Education led this 'crackdown'. Parents were complaining about some schools that were acting in an unscrupulous way, charging fees but providing very poor quality education. It was (former president) Bakili Muluzi's second term in office and the ministry set a minimum level of requirements with ISAMA. Among other stipulations, the minimum requirements stated that schools must be in purpose built buildings, and have a minimum of 50% qualified teachers.

The number of private schools reduced from around 370 to 185 in 2009 and is now back up to around 200. This is due to the school closures, underreporting and also the poor economic situation, meaning that parents could not afford fees. In addition, many people were afraid to send their children to private schools in that time, fearing that they could be shut down. ISAMA leadership described the crackdown in 2009 as a terrible time. They complained to the ministry about the poor conditions of some CDSS schools and succeeded in closing one down after complaints.

Previous studies such as Lewin and Sayed (2005) and Anderson (2001) had noted the poor quality in many private schools before 2009. As Anderson observed:

> although some of the teaching I saw was very good, much of it was very dull, and variety was generally lacking. Where was the group-work, the pupil reflection, problem solving, independent thinking, creativity and innovation? (Anderson, 2001).

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[1] Interview with President of ISAMA

Many private schools operate in environments that are far from satisfactory. The report by the Malawi Staff Development Institute noted that "the pressure to accommodate this influx of primary school leavers led to private school springing in every conceivable place such as residential houses, beer halls, tobacco barns and all sorts of dilapidated buildings" (SDI 2001:1). The problem seems to be that most proprietors of private schools have little or no knowledge of school management and operations. They also have to depend on teachers many of whom are untrained graduates, or primary school teachers teaching at secondary level.

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Private schools in Malawi have vague and confusing governance as there is no provision for them in the (1962) Education Act. They can get a licence to operate from the local assembly, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Trade – where they can register as a business. To qualify for a licence, the proposed school premises have to meet Ministry of Education prescribed minimum requirements for establishing a secondary/primary school (full details about conditions for opening a private school are contained in Appendix XXX). These minimum requirements are intended to ensure that schools promote favourable psychological, social, intellectual and physical conditions to effective learning and ensure pupils' health and safety.

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Thus all individuals and organisations wishing to open private schools under licence have to apply to the Secretary for Education through their respective Division Education Office prior to the registration of pupils and the actual opening of the proposed school premises. MoE will, before granting the licence, visit the proposed premises of the new school to meet the proprietors to ensure that the basic minimum requirements are fully fulfilled. Most schools however do not have a licence or pay tax. Schools need to get a licence from the Ministry of Education, a service that was previously controlled by the 'registrar' but is now the responsibility of The Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) – which manages school inspection before giving a school a licence and then afterwards inspects schools occasionally. DIAS was of the opinion that it is difficult for someone to open a private school without being known to them since district education managers (DEM) will notice that a school has been opened.

The economic conditions in Malawi are hard for private schools (as well as other businesses). Private schools find it hard to raise finance; Bank Loans are dependent on having collateral – such as owning the land that the school in built on. A bank called the Opportunity International Bank of Malawi, a US owned microfinance institution, has lent money to private schools without collateral, but the interest rates are very high, at 50% with fees. This makes the loans very difficult to pay off. Some ISAMA members entered into these loan schemes as a group, using the association as a guarantor. A few members took loans and most of them got into financial difficulties and had to sell their schools. This was partly due to the high interest rates but also to do with the timing where the scheme operated at the same time as enrolments fell due to the crackdown and economic crisis.

Key informant interviews elsewhere revealed that the devaluation in the Kwacha and economic problems in Malawi have caused schools problems. In some schools, fees which are paid in Kwacha had to go up to help the schools afford teachers' salaries, which are also paid in Kwacha but linked by teachers to the Pound or Dollar. It was reported that at Kamuzu Academy, all the

salaries and fees have been linked to the dollar to avoid fluctuations in Kwacha – but this makes it difficult for local people to pay. It was also reported that St. Andrews used to be selective, using an entrance exam to select students, like a grammar school, but it has moved to a more comprehensive model, using an entrance test only for diagnostic / placement reasons. This has helped the school to maintain numbers of students even while the economic situation in the country is bad.

ISAMA schools are divided into bands by fees as presented in Table XXX below. It is clear that these fee bands map directly onto the different types of government schools, indicating different markets at different levels.

Table 3 Private school (ISAMA) and government school fee bands

Band	Tuition Fee per term	ISAMA membership fee per year	Secondary teachers' salaries	Type of Government Secondary School	Tuition fees charged per term
A	5,000-10,000	10,000	14,500-30,000	CDSS	3000
B	10,000-20,000	20,000	35,000-45,000	ODS	5000
C	20,000-35,000	35,000	35,000-45,000	CSS	20000
D	35,000 and above	50,000	35,000-120,000	Grant Aided	35000

10,000 MK = US$25 at current exchange rate.

Most schools are in bands A and B and are lower fee than band C and D. All the case study schools selected for this research are in bands A and B, except one (these are described in more detail in chapter 5). These four bands of schools map roughly onto the four categories outlined earlier in terms of the quality of provision, infrastructure and the market that they enter into. They also map directly onto the types of government school provision. The band A and B schools that this study focuses on have annual fees which range from $13-$75 per year. Average GNI per capita is $320 per year (World Bank 2013), so it is clear that fees in this range, the lowest available for private secondary education, are unaffordable to the vast majority of families. In most surveys of household expenditure it is unusual for more than 10% of household income to be allocated to education. Schools often charge more for boarding and a range of other fees such as uniform, food, exam fess, registration fees, and a GPF – general purpose fund.

Secondary schools in Malawi are organised into clusters, which include public and private schools. Clusters charge a membership fee and then pay for teachers to go to cluster level activities, training etc. One interviewee from ISAMA said that many private schools regarded the

clusters as not being worth the money that they cost and accused public school head teachers of trying to profit from the clusters offering poor quality training and charging them exorbitantly.

According to ISAMA, chains of private schools are not common in Malawi. The largest chain had three schools, and several others who had two schools. This was put down to a problem of trust. "Parents want to see that the owner of the school is personally involved/invested in the school and that they are present regularly" a head teacher from ISAMA observed. It was reported that there were Zimbabwean and Zambian owners of schools in Malawi, and a Nigerian owns one of the case study schools.

Speaking about the children in private schools, both ISAMA as well as the schools visited outlined how the best students go to the government conventional secondary schools, national secondary schools and grant aided secondary schools, which are highly selective, high performing and cheaper than private schools of the same quality. "The problems with our schools is that we have to deal with the leftovers – the government schools take all the cream" an interviewee from ISAMA observed. Most students in private schools are therefore children from the top quintile of the population by wealth who were not selected for the best government schools, but were selected either for low quality CDSS schools or not selected at all.

Summary

The review above has showed that as the demand for more secondary education intensified, more and more private schools were founded alongside government providers. The Government of Malawi attaches great importance and emphasis to education. Various plans have provided the basis for a process that includes the rationale for planning and implementation. The government has made the improvement of quality, equity, relevance, access and efficiency in Education as the main strategic priorities.

Despite planning for increased private sector involvement in education provision, there is still an absence of a coherent and enforceable legal framework for private sector provision. The 2009 national inspection seems to have been a one off event; there is still no on-going, sustainable institutional forum that should genuinely guide the development of private education in Malawi. Paradoxically, it is not only new private schools that have been established with little or no regulation or adherence to established norms. The same is also true of the majority of the community day secondary schools (CDSS) around the country. There has been little effective regulation and monitoring of the CDSS, and many have conditions similar to those found in for profit private schools. In principle all formal institutions, whether public or private, should be required to adhere to national policies, norms, standards and regulations, and the government should monitor and regulate all institutions.

Another important pattern that emerges is the exclusive nature of secondary education in Malawi. The costs involved in terms of fees, exclude all but the wealthiest Malawians. The limited supply of secondary schooling is therefore rationed by ability to pay and performance in national exams. The wealthiest people in Malawi can afford to send their children to high cost

international private schools, which do not select by performance. For the rest, very good performance in exams can lead to entry to high quality public schools, which also charge fees. Those who do not get into these schools, are selected for conventional and CDSS. Those who do not get selected for these, or who do not want to attend CDSS but can afford to pay, opt for the private for profit secondary schools that this study focuses upon.

Chapter 3: Supply and Demand for Secondary Education in Malawi

Introduction

This chapter sets out some of the background to the supply and demand for secondary education in Malawi. The chapter describes secondary provision in the country and examines primary enrolment patterns that have implications for secondary level demand. It also examines the budgetary allocations and limits to affordability of secondary education in the country.

Secondary Education – Supply and Access

Secondary school education in Malawi begins after the eight-year primary education cycle, and consists of a junior and senior cycle. The official entry age into secondary school is 13 years. The junior cycle consist of the first two years of secondary education (Forms 1 and 2) after which students sit for the JCE. The majority of students who pass this examination continue to senior secondary education, also consisting of two years (Forms 3 and 4).

It is important to acknowledge that post-primary education encompasses secondary schools, but also tertiary education, teacher training, technical and vocational programmes, and life skills training for adolescents. In addition, post-primary education includes formal and non-formal education systems. This multidimensional conceptualization is important because a linear focus on only the primary-secondary-tertiary education continuum excludes many youth from learning opportunities that are essential to life. However, in this report we focus only upon formal secondary schooling.

Gender disparities in access and attainment are more pronounced at post primary levels. In 1995, girls constituted 39% of the total secondary school enrolment (MoE 1995). In 2011, the figure was 34% (World Bank, 2013). Research suggests that the family background of secondary school pupils differ markedly. Parents of girls attending secondary school education are better educated and are of a higher socio-economic status than parents of boys (Chimombo, 1999).

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In the early days of educational planning in Malawi, there was a cautious approach to the expansion of secondary education as it was geared towards meeting a wide range of manpower needs in both the public and private sectors. Secondary education provided an essential base from which these manpower needs would be met (OPC, 1971: 93). Few structural changes had been made since independence in 1964 and the non-government sector in education was very small. Malawi has had one of the lowest participation rates in secondary schooling in Africa. It is only recently that gross enrolment rates (GER) have exceeded 30%. Transition rates into secondary schools have been low.

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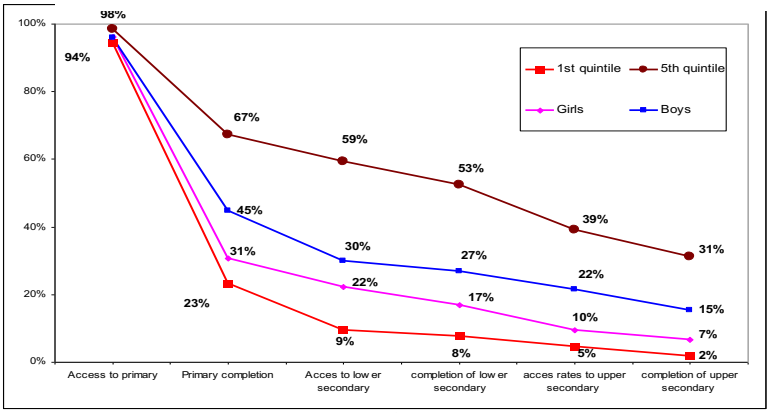
It is one thing to have access to secondary and it is another thing to stay and benefit from the system. One of the determinants of transition and persistence in secondary school is the socio-economic status and indeed the poverty level of the household. Poverty levels in Malawi are high, 52% of the Malawian population is living below the national poverty line and 74% below the PPP

$1.25 per day poverty line (UNDP 2013:160). With these high poverty levels, it is very difficult for most families to find any level of tuition fees for their children's post primary education. Where choices have to be made in cases where parents can only afford to send one child to school; they will send a son rather than a daughter, assuming that an educated son will earn more in the labour market than an educated daughter (Scharf, 2007). Figure XXX depicts education status in terms of access and persistence in schooling.

Figure 3 Schooling by gender and socio-economic group

FIGURE 3.4: ACCESS AND TRANSITION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SEX



Source: Country Status Report (2008:130)

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The graph shows that only 31% of girls complete primary compared to 45% of boys. In terms of access to lower secondary, 22% of the girls will have access to lower secondary education compared to 30% of boys. At the end of the secondary cycle, there are only 7% of the girls and 15% of boys remaining in school. These graphs indicate that girls do not have the opportunities in terms of completing primary education. And although the other analysis shows that girls are better off in terms of accessing secondary education, the evidence shows that when considered in totality (i.e. if you start from those who are lost in primary), girls' progression and persistence is weaker compared to boys.

The graph also shows the huge disparity between the top quintile and bottom quintile of Malawian households, which is much wider than the gender disparity in the graph. While 59% of the top quintile by wealth access secondary school and 31% complete it, only 9% of learners from the lowest quintile get into secondary school and only 2% complete it. Socio-economic status appears to be a much stronger predictor of access and progression than gender.

The Demand for Secondary Schooling in Malawi

Free Primary Education was introduced in Malawi in 1994. Primary enrolments increased from about 1.8 million to over 2.9 million in less than two years. But analysis of transition to secondary in Malawi shows that while many children find a place in primary schools, the majority of these are denied a chance to maximize their potential by continuing to secondary school. In the year of FPE policy for example, 1,006,194 pupils finished Standard 1. However, at the end of the primary cycle, in seven years of further schooling, only 160,361 of these finished Standard 8 and 40,781 students (4.05%) were registered in Form 1 (MoE, 2002). The NESP projected that a rapid increase in enrolment would be obtained by a 30% increase in enrolment in Government-supported schools by 2012 and 90% by 2017, an increase in enrolment in Open Schools from nearly 7,000 in 2007 to 19,000 in 2012 and 34,000 in 2017, and increases in private enrolment of 90% by 2012 and 230% by 2017. Overall, the Government will maintain a 50:50 male to female ratio for secondary school places. These projections are based more on aspiration than underlying trends.

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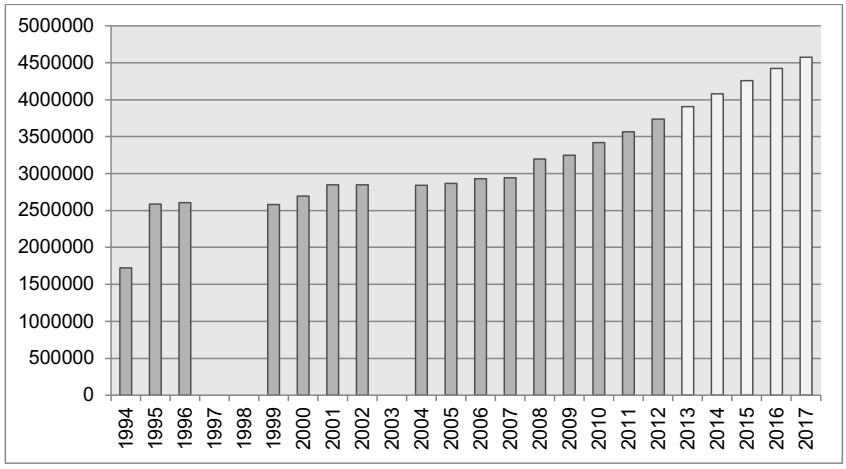
Future enrolment can be projected from primary enrolment data. This uses assumptions consistent with the Ministry of Education's policies on reducing repetition and drop out. In brief this assumes that repetition and drop out will fall to no more than about 5% throughout the primary system. The age cohort is assumed to grow at about 2%, which is consistent with data from the 2008 Census. Figure XXX shows primary enrolments since 1994 (in grey) and projected enrolments (in white) based on UNESCO data until 2017.

Figure 4 Malawi primary enrolments and projections 1994-2017

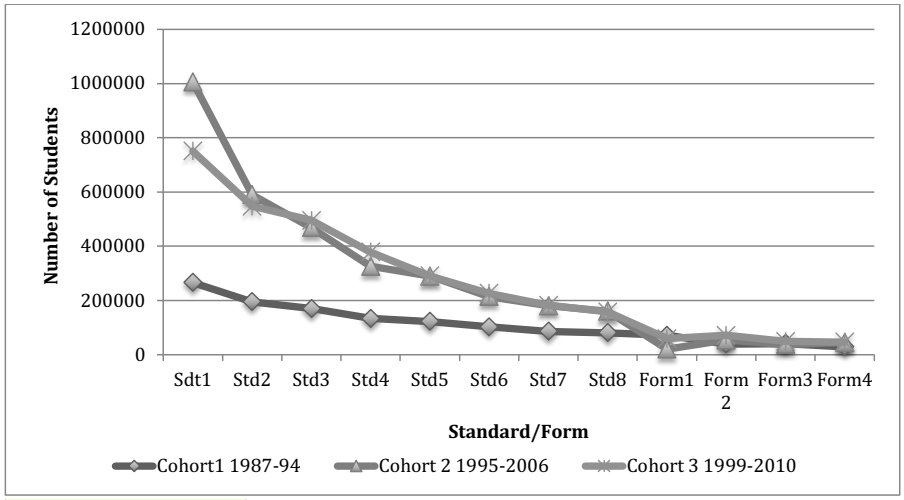


Source: World Bank (2013) and EPDC (2013)

While efforts to universalise primary education have resulted in the substantial increases in the numbers of students accessing primary schools, secondary education is far from keeping pace. This is clearly demonstrated by Figure XXX, which displays cohorts progressing through primary

and secondary school levels, showing the fast drop off in the transition from primary to secondary level which persists in the three cohorts, so that the number of students remains very low at secondary level.

Figure 5 Cohort Analysis (Nominal)



Source: Chimombo, 2013

The figure shows enrolment by cohort at three points: twelve years before the FPE policy in 1987, in the year of FPE in 1995 and five years after the FPE policy. Pupils entering Standard one are tracked to see how they progress along the standards and forms. The steep gradients of the three graphs are testimony of the long-standing attrition problem in Malawi. The graph shows that the gradients of the two graphs after the FPE are steeper; an indication that as more pupils are induced to participate in education, more as a proportion of those who started drop out along the journey. The message about transition to secondary in Malawi is that while many children find a place in primary schools, the majority of these are denied a chance to maximize their potential. Since 2004 increases in secondary school enrolments have meant that a larger proportion of primary school students are getting into secondary school.

Budget allocation by sector

An examination of the 2009/10 budget allocation to the education sector is presented in Figure XX.

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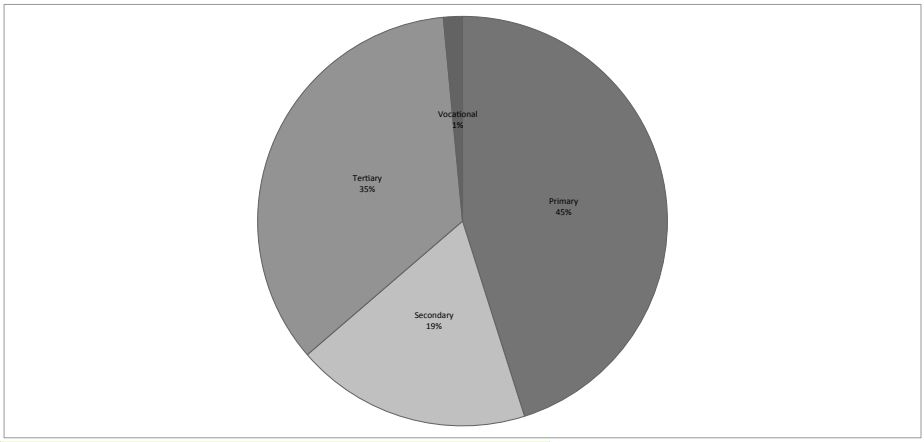
Is the transition rate to secondary school going up or down?

Figure 6 2009/10 Budget Allocation



Source: Recurrent and capital expenditure book- 2009/10

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The highest share of allocation in 2009/10 went to primary sector at 45% seconded by tertiary education at 35% and then secondary sector with only 19%. With a total of 243,838 students in the secondary school sector, this represented a cost of MK 23,899 or US$ 50 per student per year (excluding the recurrent cost of CDSS which predominantly fell on the primary budget since most teachers were paid from this source as ex-primary teachers). This compares with that of tertiary education at MK1,157,596 (about US$ 2570) per student per year. The ratios in costs in Table 1 are extreme and indicate underinvestment in the school system and unbalanced allocations between levels.

Table 4 2009/10 Budget allocations for education

	Budget allocation	Percentage	Students	Cost per student per year	Ratio Primary=1
Primary	14,150,962,699	45%	3,671,481	3,854	1
Secondary	5,827,547,193	19%	243,838	23,899	6.2
Tertiary	10,923,079,605	35%	9,436	1,157,596	300
Vocational	470,061,770	1%	1,705	275,696	71
Total	31,371,651,267	100	3,926,460	7,990	

Source: Recurrent and capital expenditure book- 2009/10

Standard eight enrolment is projected to rise to 520,000 by 2016, to meet this demand; the allocation to secondary will have to rise by 1130% by 2016 at constant prices. This could not happen without a substantial reduction in allocation to primary and tertiary if the total allocation to education were to remain the same. The primary sector is currently protected and prioritised

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(currently at 45%) until FPE goals have been achieved but due to the extremely high dropout rate, these goals are unlikely to be achieved soon.

It should be noted that the CDSS system, large though it is, does not currently constitute a solution to the problems identified. If it is regularised such that its schools become more and more like normal government secondary schools (secondary qualified teachers on secondary level salaries with similar working practices), then the costs to government will rise to levels similar to those for an expanded government school sector, which de facto is what it would be. Some gains would be available if CDSS have lower costs than conventional schools (cost recovery of boarding subsidies, more efficient utilisation of teachers) but it is difficult to see how these could be much less if the very low quality of CDSS is improved.

The Limits of Affordability

52% of the Malawian population is living below the national poverty line and 74% below the PPP $1.25 per day poverty line (UNDP 2013:160). This is the equivalent in October 2013 of a person having an annual income per person of MK 175,074 – 74% of Malawians have less. The national poverty line defines a person as poor if they live in a household where annual per capita income is less than MK 37,002, 52% of Malawians have less (Republic of Malawi, 2012). This is equivalent to US$ 96 in October 2013, but the equivalent figure for 2011 was worth US$ 575 (IFPRI, 2011). It seems clear that no family below the national poverty line, more than half the population, would ever be able to afford the costs of a single child attending any form of fee-paying secondary school.

The average family size of poor households is around 4.6, larger in rural and poor households (NSO 2011). Those below the poverty line have to allocate a greater proportion of household income to education. Even this would be unlikely to be enough given the high probability that the household had at least one other child in school needing support. If these figures are accurate they suggest that there is a limit to secondary school enrolments in general determined by its costs that does not extend much beyond the 20th percentile of household income, and the limit may be as low as the 15th percentile. In fact, this situation is likely to worsen given the prevailing economic conditions of the country.

Conclusion

Malawi has a historically small and underfunded secondary school system. Population growth and efforts made in the last few decades to expand access to basic education have increased the numbers entering and completing primary school. Completion rates at primary level are still very low, but gross numbers completing are increasing nonetheless. This creates demand for secondary education. Secondary education is currently funded in a way which means that only a very few students receive subsidised government secondary education. The total amount spent on secondary education is too low and the amount spent per student far too high for universal access. The secondary education system is too small for the population of school age and to

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Keith – what is the best way to do this?

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Anything more than 10% of HH expenditure is likely to be unaffordable

absorb the number of primary completers. This has created a demand for private schools from households with sufficient income to pay .

However, the costs involved in running a for profit private secondary school, even if it is done with minimum investment in teachers and infrastructure, with many teachers unqualified and very basic classrooms (See case study schools), mean that it is unaffordable to all but the wealthiest Malawians. Those below the national poverty line and the $1.25 poverty line, representing the vast majority of the population, simply cannot afford any kind of secondary education since all secondary schools have costs to housholds, let alone to attend a for profit private school.

Private schooling is unlikely grow unless either its costs fall which is not the indication at the moment. Private schools acan and do capture richer students from poor quality CDSSs. The cheapest private schools in the case studies appear to be running near their margins of viability with most costs in salaries and limited scope to reduce these costs. If the costs of private schools superior to CDSSs continue to rise, it is probable that growth in private schooling will continue stall and the numbers reach a plateau.

One question of interest to this study then becomes whether new arrangements related to the private sector (such as loan finance from banks) could help them to expand provision, improve quality and also improve equity. The loans would have to be paid off from increased income. The experiences of private schools that we heard about suggest that banks are reluctant to finance private secondary schools in Malawi. A question for further research might be why this is the case.

Chapter 4: Private Schools in Malawi – an Overview

Introduction

In this chapter we describe the private secondary school sector in Malawi using Government Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Malawi National Exam Board (MANEB) data. These allow us to examine the number of schools, their proportional share of the total number, and how this has changed over time, enrolments and performance. We are also able to disaggregate the data by district and by gender, which reveal very uneven patterns of access across Malawi and between genders.

The discussion also highlights some problems with the data, which are principally, underreporting of EMIS data due to non-cooperation by some private schools in protest at government regulation, apparent problems of school classification, or differences in classification between years, and the inability to disaggregate data between different types of private schools and conventional schools.

The data we describe suggests that private schools educate a large minority of secondary level students – almost a quarter. Private schools overall perform relatively well in national exams, better than the least selective form of government school – CDSS, but not as well as more competitive government schools, the conventional secondary schools. Private schools account for a disproportionate proportion of University of Malawi entrants. One of the most interesting findings is that although secondary education overall is very gender unequal, private schools have very equal gender parity index (GPI) in terms of the exam candidates they enter. This corresponds with the findings from the case studies that suggest that entry into private schools is determined only by ability to pay, rather than other considerations, however is contradicts earlier suggestions that households may decide that sending boys to private schools represents a better investment of household income. Because private secondary schooling in Malawi is accessible only to the very wealthiest households, they may not make these kinds of investment decisions (Chimombo, 1999).

Schools

Education statistics (EMIS) show that the number of secondary schools in Malawi increased from 62 schools in 1979 to 332 schools in 1993 to 1,158 in 2008 and to 1,041 schools in 2011. The data shows an initial slow growth in the number of secondary schools with marked increases in recent times. Increases are especially marked around the end of the Banda regime, transition to democracy and the advent of universal primary education in 1994. The decrease in the number of private schools since the financial crisis and government inspection in 2009 is also notable.

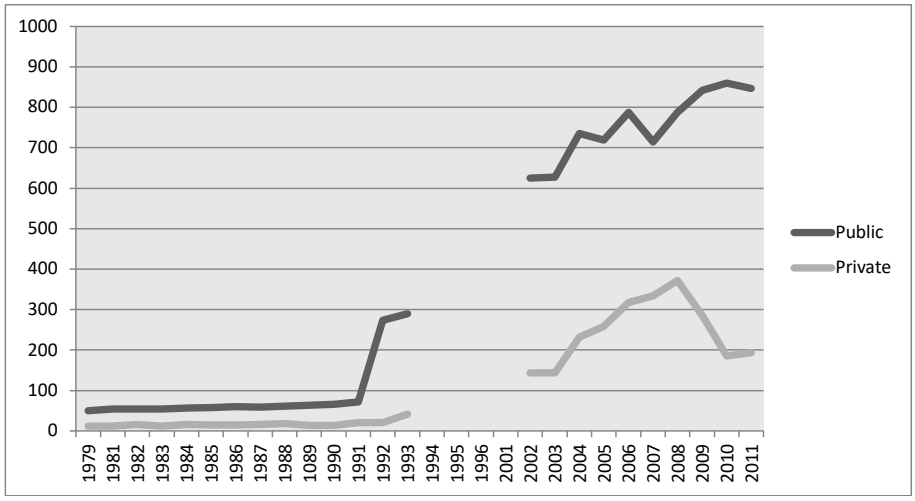
Analysis of the education system in Malawi is hampered by the lack of accurate data. In any given year, the number of schools responding to the annual census is not complete and the problem is particularly acute at the secondary school level. This is one of the major problems in any attempt to understand the growth of education in Malawi. The graph below omits the crucial years between 1994 and 2001 due to incomplete data. The decrease in the number of private

secondary schools since 2008 is also, we assume due both to actual school closures and lack of data / responses from schools to EMIS questionnaires.

Table 5 Schools in Malawi (1979-2011)

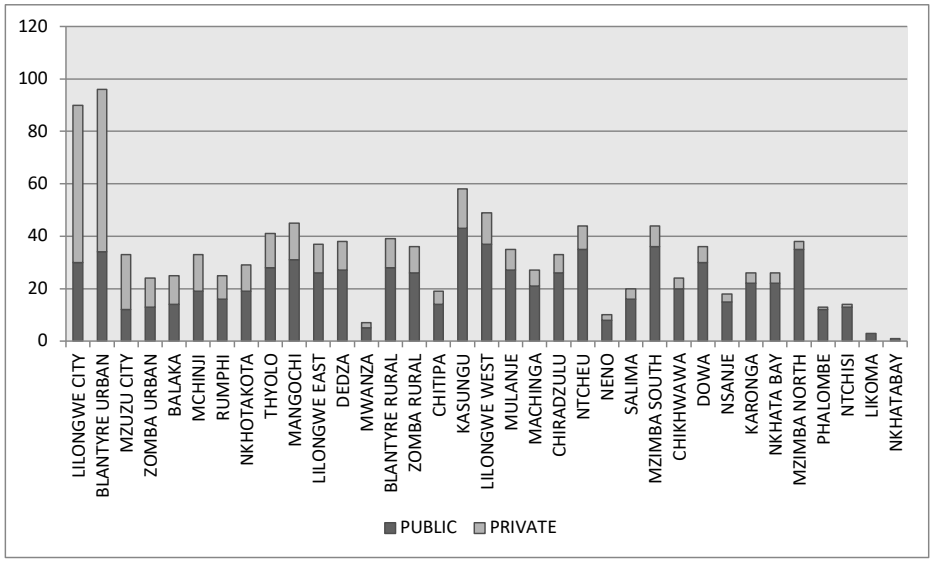
Year	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools		
	Public	**Private**	**Total**	**Public**	**Private**	**Total**
1979	1648	-------	**1648**	50	12	**62**
1981	1715	-------	**1715**	54	12	**66**
1982	1744	-------	**1744**	54	16	**70**
1983	1769	-------	**1769**	54	12	**66**
1984	2425	-------	**2425**	57	16	**73**
1985	2495	-------	**2495**	58	15	**73**
1986	2520	-------	**2520**	60	15	**75**
1987	2533	-------	**2533**	59	16	**75**
1988	2660	-------	**2660**	61	18	**79**
1089	2506	-------	**2506**	64	14	**78**
1990	2173	-------	**2173**	66	14	**80**
1991	2346	-------	**2346**	72	21	**93**
1992	2739	-------	**2739**	274	21	**295**
1993	3056	-------	**3056**	290	42	**332**
1994	3216	-------	**3216**	-------	-------	-------
1995	3424	-------	**3424**	76	31	**107**
1996	3706	-------	**3706**	487	137	**624**
2001	4802	55	**4857**	-------	-------	-------
2002	-------	-------	-------	625	143	**781**
2003	-------	-------	-------	627	143	**785**
2004	937	28	**965**	735	232	**967**
2005	5004	155	**5159**	719	259	**978**
2006	5041	190	**5231**	887	318	**1106**
2007	5086	221	**5307**	715	334	**1049**
2008	5118	343	**5461**	788	372	**1160**
2009	5106	298	**5404**	842	285	**1127**
2010	5191	201	**5392**	860	185	**1045**
2011	5225	170	**5395**	847	194	**1041**

Figure 7 Public and Private Secondary Schools in Malawi 1979-2011



Malawi National Exam board (MANEB) data for 2012 show that the number of public and private schools and the proportion of different types of providers in different districts varies widely in the different districts of Malawi. Figure XXX shows the districts of Malawi organised from left to right in order of the ratio of public and private schools, with Lilongwe City having about half as many public secondary schools as private, and Phalombe having 13 times more public schools than private. Wealthy, urban, fast growing districts seem to have a higher proportion of private secondary schools than poorer, rural districts, from which people are emigrating. The growth of private schools happens in the districts, which already have the best secondary education provision and enrolment ratios – unsurprisingly the private sector is responding to demand from the wealthy and aspirational, rather than plugging gaps in the system. Where internal migrants and newly wealthy people overwhelm the inadequate public system, private schools respond to demand. In chapter 5 we look at the migration histories of children in for profit private schools.

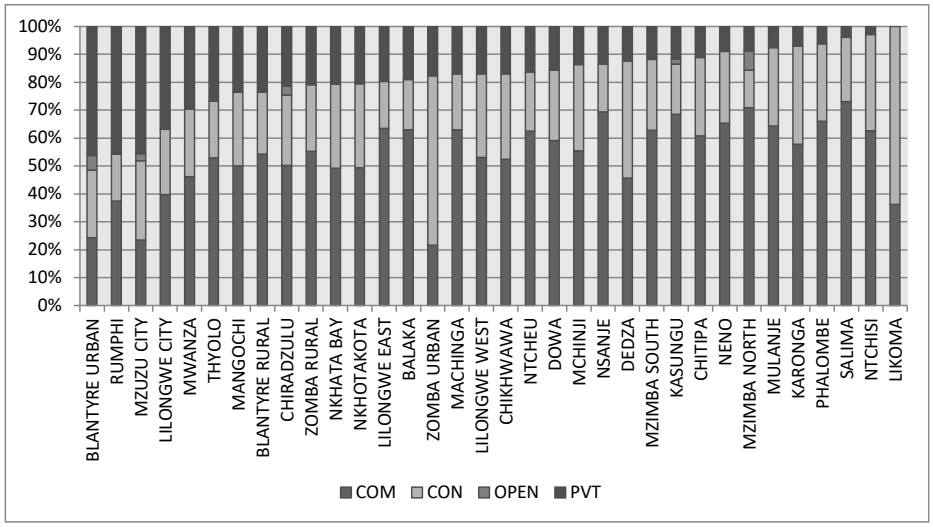
Figure 8 Secondary Schools in Malawi by Type and District



Enrolment

Figure XXX below presents the proportion of MSCE candidates from schools of different types in each district of Malawi in 2012. The graph is based on exam board data, which may be more reliable than EMIS data as schools cannot and do not refuse to submit data. The ratio of public school students (from CDSS, conventional and open secondary schools) to private school students sitting the MSCE in a district ranges from almost 1:1 in Blantyre Urban to 33:1 in Nchisi. In most districts around half of the students are from CDSS, apart from Likoma and Zomba Urban, where there is a large proportion of conventional schools, and Blantyre Urban, Rumphi, Mzuzu City and Lilongwe City, (the major cities of Malawi) where almost half of MSCE candidates were from private schools. The pattern is similar to that observed with the number of schools (although the number of schools is a poor proxy for enrolment, as school size is important). Wealthier, urban and rapidly growing areas have high proportions of private school entrants for exams. They also tend to have higher enrolment rates, although the causality is hard to establish. It is also important to note that in exam board data, grant aided schools are counted as conventional schools.

Figure 9 2012 MSCE Entrants by School Type and District



Source: MANEB 2012 MSCE Entrants

Table XXX presents the enrolment in primary and secondary schools since 1993. It shows the steady increase in enrolments since UPE. Primary enrolments have more than doubled over the 18-year timeframe, while secondary enrolments have increased seven times.

Table 6 Primary and Secondary Enrolments Malawi 1993-2011

Year	Primary enrolments	Secondary Enrolments	Ratio (primary / secondary

1993	1795451	36550	49
1994	1895423	46544	41
1995	2860819	48360	59
1996	2887107	57812	50
1997	2905950	70761	41
1998	2805785	59836	47
1999	2896280	75969	38
2000	3016972	46396	65
2001	3187835	57635	55
2002	3164191	45989	69
2003	3112513	54492	57
2004	3166786	180157	18
2005	3200646	183854	17
2006	3280714	218310	15
2007	3306926	210325	16
2008	3600771	233578	15
2009	3671481	243838	15
2010	3868643	240918	16
2011	4034220	256343	16

Source: MoE EMIS data – various years

It can also be observed from the table that secondary school education started to open up in 2004 with the ratio of primary school students to secondary school students narrowing sharply. There cannot have been an increase in secondary enrolments from 54,000 to 180,000 in one year. This data must be because of a reclassification of schools so that private schools and CDSS were included in the total whereas before 2004 they were not. It is possible that the 1995 FPE graduates were exerting pressure and hence forcing their way into the secondary sector by default (Rose, 2005). The gross enrolment rate (GER) for secondary education has remained very low and was estimated at 34% in 2012 using the 2008 population census and the 2012 EMIS data. In terms of gender, there have consistently been more boys than girls in secondary schools in Malawi (World Bank, 2013).

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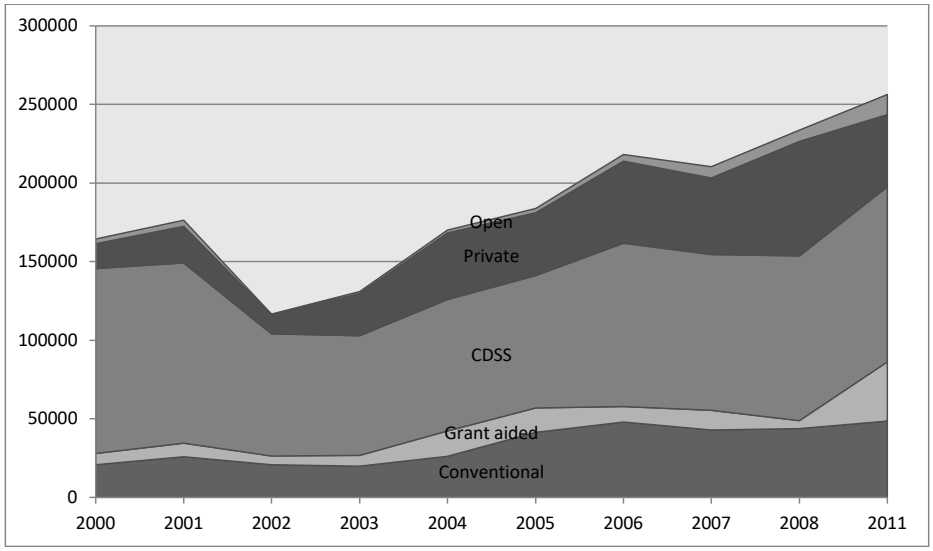
In table XXX, the growth of secondary school enrolment has been presented by school type since 2000. The table illustrates some of the weaknesses in EMIS data. There appear to be huge changes between years that cannot possibly have happened. In 2008 enrolments in grant-aided schools dropped sharply, and those in private schools rose sharply – indicating that there may have been some classification errors or changes. This is very clear in figure XXX below. We must assume that the sudden decrease in grant aided enrolments and corresponding increase in private school enrolments is an error in the data rather than reflecting reality. The 2008 data seems to be problematic.

Table 7 Secondary Enrolment by School Type 2000-2011

School type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2011
Government	20906	25738	20684	19861	26051	41412	47996	42734	43700	48581
%	13%	15%	18%	15%	15%	23%	22%	20%	19%	19%
Grant aided	6997	8764	5615	6908	16322	15382	9717	12730	5175	37740
%	4%	5%	5%	5%	10%	8%	4%	6%	2%	15%
CDSS	117783	114751	77682	76084	83492	84351	104161	99172	104716	111371
%	72%	65%	67%	58%	49%	46%	48%	47%	45%	43%
Private	15796	23133	12035	27016	42335	39887	52003	48750	72864	45772
%	10%	13%	10%	21%	25%	22%	24%	23%	31%	18%
Open	2977	3866	477	1231	1957	2822	4433	6939	7118	12879
%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%	3%	5%
Total	164459	176252	116493	131100	170157	183854	218310	210325	233573	256343

Source: MoE EMIS data – various years

Figure 10 Secondary enrolment by school type 2000-2011



It can be noted from Table XX and Figure XX that in the secondary school sub-sector, the share of students is greatest in the CDSS where 43% of learners were enrolled in 2011. However this proportion has been decreasing steadily since 2000, when CDSS enrolled 72% of learners. Government policy has been one of providing only sufficient secondary school places at Form II and Form IV levels to meet the student input level of post-secondary training institutions and the estimated direct manpower needs of the economy (MoE, 1994). But since 1998, in addition to the upgrading of Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE)[2] centres to CDSS there has also been an increase in both the enrolment and proportion share of private secondary schools. In 2000 private schools educated just 10% of all secondary school students in Malawi. In 2008 the proportion of secondary students in private school peaked at 31%, and in 2011 it was 18%, its lowest level since 2002. It is important to remember several caveats to this data. The problems highlighted above of possible classification errors or inconsistencies between years, potential non-cooperation in the EMIS process from private schools in protest about government regulation and the nature of secondary education in Malawi. Overall net enrolment rates at secondary level in Malawi remain below 30%. Those who survive to enter secondary school are already a select minority.

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Grant aided schools have also become relatively important, they educated 4% of students in 2000 and in 2011 educated 15%. However, the increase in grant sided school enrolments between 2008-2011 and corresponding decrease in private school enrolments suggests that this may be the result of a reclassification of schools rather than real change. This may be in error, due to inconsistencies between years or a response to the government's regulation regime. Open schools have increased the proportion that they educate from 2% to 5%. Conventional secondary schools have remained relatively stable in terms of number of schools, educating 13% in 2000 and 19% in 2011. The average school size is therefore likely to have increased.

As observed above, examination entry statistics from the Malawi National Exam Board (MANEB) provide another indication of participation rates in different types of schools. They may be more reliable in terms of estimating numbers and relative share of provision than EMIS data although they come with their own problems. We are unable to distinguish between different types of private schools in the MANEB data so the category of 'private' includes all private schools, lumping expensive elite schools together with the least expensive forms of private secondary education. The numbers entered for Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and for Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) are analysed below.

Table 8 JCE candidates by school type

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012

[2] In 1998, all MCDEs were converted into Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS)

Conventional	22936	23296	22669	23959	24471
%	19%	20%	19%	19%	19%
CDSS	74426	71436	78779	84372	84365
%	63%	62%	65%	66%	66%
Private	20892	19879	19676	18686	17456
%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%
Open	652	624	726	894	942
%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	118906	115235	121850	127911	127234

Source: MANEB Exam statistics

Table XXX shows that the number of students sitting for the JCE is by far the largest in the CDSS by a factor of more than three compared to conventional schools and by a factor close to five compared to private schools. The numbers of candidates in CDSS is increasing while that of conventional schools has remained constant and that of private schools appears to have decreased since 2008. There are an insignificant number of students from open schools at the JCE level, less than 1% of all JCE candidates were from open schools in 2012.

Table 9 MSCE candidates by school type

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
CSS	29075	31446	26785	32282	34175
%	26%	26%	27%	27%	26%
CDSS	53444	54967	46661	58368	63798
%	47%	46%	48%	48%	49%
Private	29981	31137	23080	28891	31066
%	26%	26%	24%	24%	24%
Open	1255	1373	1006	1265	1411
%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	113755	118923	97532	120806	130450

Source: MANEB Exam Statistics

At the MSCE level, the CDSS continue to sit the majority of the students. Private school candidates are roughly equal in number to conventional schools. There are more students from the open schools at the MSCE level compared to the JCE level. It is striking that the proportion of MSCE candidates from different school types appears so stable when enrolments appear to be rather more volatile. Private schools enrolled 31% of secondary school learners in 2008 and submitted 26% of MSCE candidates; in 2011 they enrolled just 18% of secondary school learners, according to EMIS, but submitted 24% of MSCE candidates. This indicates that there may be some error,

most probably in the EMIS data. The number of private school candidates is not growing and seems to have peaked and reached a plateau which is predictable in terms of affordability. There was a slight decrease after 2009, which may reflect the impact of the government closure of some private schools, damage to the reputations of private schools and economic hardship.

In terms of gender there are significant differences between the gender parity indices (GPI) between school types in their MSCE candidates. In all years there were more boys entered than girls. In all school types apart from open secondary schools there were more boys entered than girls, with a slow but steady trend towards parity. Open secondary schools submit only 1% of candidates for MSCE and the GPI also fluctuates more in open schools than others, so caution should be taken before reading too much into the open secondary schools figure. CDSS have the lowest GPI at only 0.62 on average over the years 2008-2012 indicating that they are entering many more boys than girls into the MSCE exams. Conventional secondary schools have an average GPI over the years of 0.80. Private schools are the most gender equal of the major school types, consistently entering almost equal numbers of candidates for the MSCE. This may be because households buying into private education have high levels of income and parental education so they are less likely to favour boy over girls, or to need to choose one over the other if they can afford to send all their children to secondary school.

Table 10 Gender Parity Index of MSCE candidates by school type

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Average
CSS	0.77	0.79	0.82	0.80	0.81	0.80
CDSS	0.57	0.58	0.60	0.66	0.69	0.62
Private	0.92	0.93	0.98	0.98	1.00	0.96
Open	1.10	0.95	1.31	1.03	0.90	1.06
Average	**0.84**	**0.81**	**0.93**	**0.87**	**0.85**	**0.86**

Source: MANEB Exam Statistics

When we put JCE and MSCE entrants together, but staggering the years to show the same cohort progressing through the two exams we see some interesting patterns. In 2010 significantly fewer candidates took the MSCE than the JCE in 2008, perhaps indicating a measure of dropout in the two years. However the pattern was reversed in 2011 and 2012, with more candidates sitting the MSCE than sat the JCE in 2009 and 2010, perhaps indicating that there were candidates resitting, the MSCE.

Disaggregating the data by school type reveals that there are remarkably stable patterns of transition between school types at secondary level, so that conventional schools have 7-8% more candidates at MSCE level than they had at JCE level, CDSS have 14-16% fewer candidates at MSCE level than they had at JCE level and private schools have 6-7% more candidates at MSCE than they have at JCE level. In open schools, there are consistently increases in the number of candidates who sit the MSCE than the JCE. There appears to be a transition of candidates from CDSS to conventional and private schools during secondary school, and candidates joining or re-joining the education system, mainly in conventional, open and private schools at the MSCE level.

Table 11 Transition between secondary school types

	2008 JCE	2010 MSCE	Change	2009 JCE	2011 MSCE	Change	2010 JCE	2012 MSCE	Change
CSS	22936	26785	3849	23296	32282	8986	22669	34175	11506
%	19%	27%	8%	20%	27%	7%	19%	26%	7%
CDSS	74426	46661	-27765	71436	58368	-13068	78779	63798	-14981
%	63%	48%	-15%	62%	48%	-14%	65%	49%	-16%
Private	20892	23080	2188	19879	28891	9012	19676	31066	11390
%	18%	24%	6%	17%	24%	7%	16%	24%	8%
Open	652	1006	354	624	1265	641	726	1411	685
%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Total	118906	97532	-21374	115235	120806	5571	121850	130450	8600

Source: MANEB Exam Statistics

Performance

Data on subject pass rates across school types has been presented in Table 3.4. The MSCE is graded from 1 to 9 with 1 to 2 representing distinction, 3 to 6 representing credit, 7 to 8 representing pass and 9 representing a failure. The 2012 student results were recorded along these categories and the results of the recorded data is presented in this table

Table 12 MSCE Performance by gender and school type 2012 (percentages)[3]

Biology	Performance Level	CDSS		CSS		Open		Private	
Sex of Student		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	Distinction	1.0	0.1	4.9	1.6	3.0	0	4.0	1.1
	Credit	13.3	4.4	31.1	17.1	21.3	8.1	26.3	16.6
	Pass	39.0	30.2	39.8	42.8	36.0	36.2	39.1	41.2
	Fail	46.7	65.2	24.2	38.5	39.7	55.7	30.7	41.2
Number who Sat		32490		16792		536		13499	
English	Distinction	0.3	0.1	2.3	2.6	0.3	0.2	2.0	1.3
	Credit	21.7	15.9	47.5	41.0	28.9	23.8	41.0	41.5
	Pass	65.3	69.5	44.6	50.5	57.2	62.9	50.2	51.1
	Fail	12.7	14.5	5.6	5.9	13.6	13.2	6.8	6.0
Number who Sat		56553		30537		1083		27727	
Maths	Distinction	1.7	0.2	6.3	1.3	2.6	0.2	4.4	1.1
	Credit	16.0	6.3	32.7	19.7	23.2	9.5	28.8	19.2

[3] Grant aided schools are grouped together with conventional schools.

	Pass	3..4	27.1	29.9	34.7	31.4	30.5	30.1	34.9
	Fail	51.9	66.4	31.1	44.2	42.8	59.8	36.7	44.8
Number who Sat		55106		30400		1052		27194	
P/Science	Distinction	0.5	0	1.9	0.4	1.2	0	1.6	0.3
	Credit	12.8	3.4	27.4	12.4	20.4	5.9	24.4	11.8
	Pass	46.3	34.0	48.2	48.7	42.2	39.6	48.6	49.4
	Fail	40.5	62.6	22.4	38.5	36.2	54.5	25.5	38.4
Number who sat		27514		24578		589		19520	

Source: MANEB Data

The results in the table show that overall; boys outperform girls in all the subjects and school types. Only in English in conventional secondary schools did a greater proportion of girls get distinctions compared to boys. In the CDSS, more than 60% of the girls failed the science subjects. Across the subjects, students in private schools performed better than students in CDSS. The best performing students were in conventional schools. A Chi-square test indicated that the differences in performance of students were very significant both by school type and sex.

A much larger proportion of candidates passed the English MSCE than the maths MSCE. However a larger proportion of students got distinctions in maths than in in English. Significant proportions of candidates got distinctions only in conventional and private schools. Candidates from CDSS and Open Schools were more likely to fail and less likely to get a merit or distinction in maths and English. This is important as these results influence selection to universities in Malawi.

Figure 11 English MSCE Results by School Type

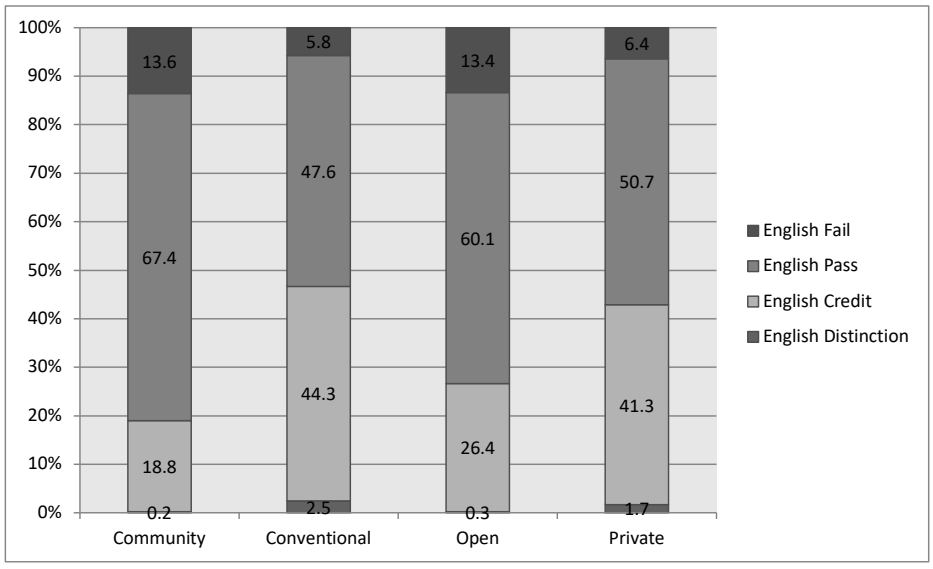


Figure 12 Maths MSCE results by school type

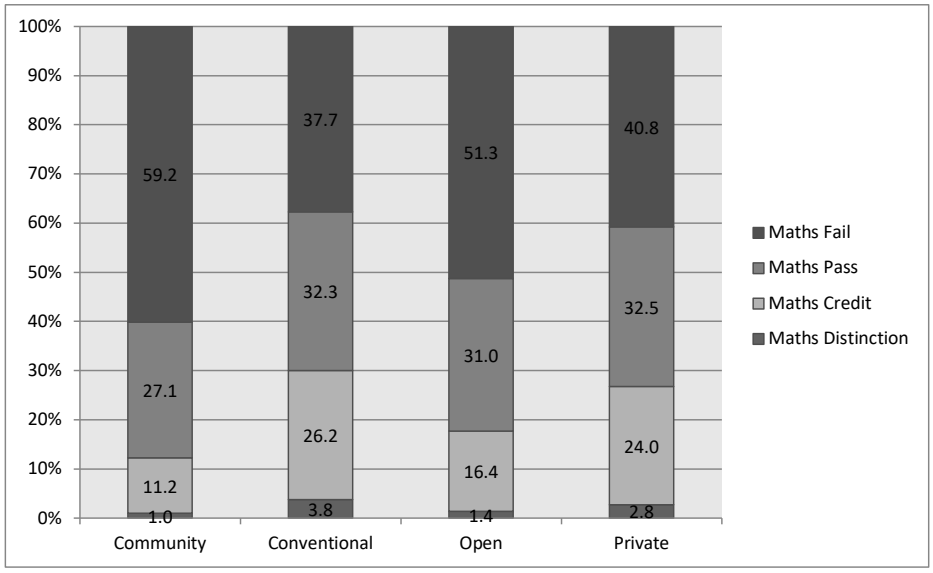
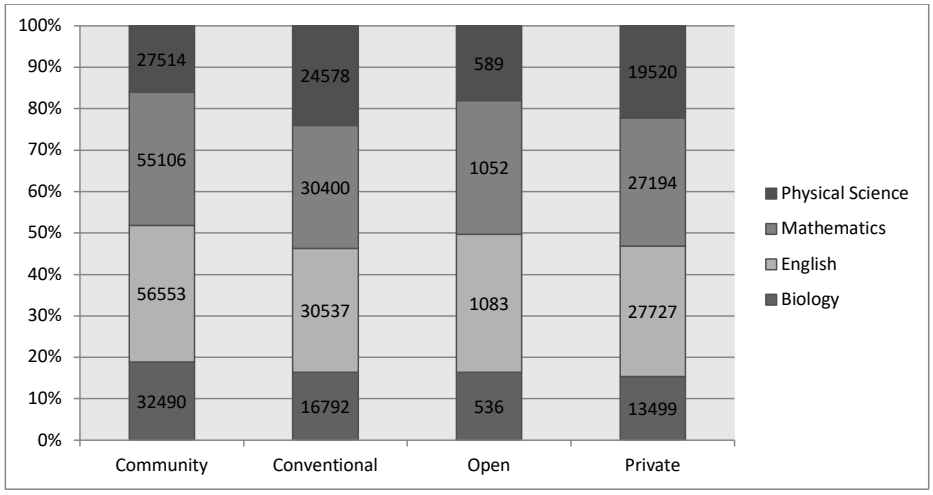


Figure XXX presents the total number of students who registered for the four subjects by school type in 2012.

Figure 13 MSCE candidates by subject and school type



It can be noted from the graph that in all the school types, students registered for English and mathematics in almost equal proportions. The differences were however between biology and physical science. In the CDSS, more students registered for biology than physical science. This is understandable given the relative ease of conducting Biology lessons compared to physical science. But in conventional and private schools, more students registered for physical science compared to biology.

University Entrance

This section examines patterns of student entrance into to higher education. This is a key indicator of performance in secondary schools in Malawi as university selection is made on the basis of MSCE performance. The analysis uses entrance data from the constituent colleges of the University of Malawi in 2010. This information has been presented in Table XXX below.

Table 13 University of Malawi Entrants 2010

		F	M	Total	GPI
Normal Conventional	Count	176	373	549	0.47
	% of school type	32%	68%	100%	
	% of gender	18%	33%	26%	
National	Count	304	200	504	1.52
	% of school type	60%	40%	100%	
	% of gender	31%	18%	24%	
Private	Count	449	412	861	1.09
	% of school type	52%	48%	100%	
	% of gender	46%	36%	41%	
CDSS/open	Count	45	154	199	0.29
	% of school type	23%	77%	100%	
	% of gender	5%	14%	9%	
Total	Count	974	1139	2113	0.86
	% of school type	46%	54%	100%	
	% of gender	100%	100%	100%	

A total of 2,113 students entered the University of Malawi in 2010. The majority of the students – about 60% - were from public schools of different types. National schools and conventional

government schools provided about 50% of all entrants, CDSS provided slightly less than 10%. A minority (41%) were from private schools of different kinds, the majority of which were high price. In terms of gender, more boys (54%) than girls (46%) entered the University of Malawi, with a GPI of 0.86 among entrants. There is an interesting distinction between the national conventional secondary schools, which are mainly boarding schools, and the normal conventional schools. National schools enter more girls than boys to the university (GPI 1.52) and make up 60% of all female entrants but only 23% of all entrants. Private schools also entered more girls than boys (GPI 1.09). Normal conventional schools (GPI 0.47), CDSS and open schools (GPI 0.29) have many more male entrants than female.

In 2010, candidates from conventional secondary schools made up 27% of all MSCE candidates, but 50% of the University of Malawi entrants. These candidates had twice the average rate of being selected for the University of Malawi, with 4% being selected, versus 2% of all candidates. Private schools accounted for 24% of all MSCE candidates, but 41% of the University of Malawi entrants, again having a 4% rate of selection. MSCE candidates from CDSS and Open Schools made up 48% of all MSCE candidates, but just 9% of University of Malawi entrants, only 0.3% of MSCE candidates from CDSS and Open schools were selected.

Table 14 MSCE candidates and University of Malawi entrants 2010

	MSCE Candidates (2010)	University of Malawi Entrants (2010)	Percentage of candidates selected
CSS (Normal + National)	26785	1053	4%
%	27%	50%	
CDSS and Open	46661	199	0%
%	48%	9%	
Private	23080	861	4%
%	24%	41%	
Total	97532	2113	2%

It is clear from the data that a few of the best schools among the private and conventional schools are dominating entrance to the University of Malawi. Candidates from CDSS and open schools have very little chance of performing well in exams and being selected to the University of Malawi, although they account for the largest share of candidates in the MSCE.

Conclusion

Private schools educate a large minority of secondary level students in Malawi – almost a quarter in most recent years. Private schools overall perform relatively well in national exams, better than the least competitive form of government school – CDSS, but not as well as more competitive government schools, the conventional secondary schools. Students in the best performing types of schools, conventional and private schools also sat for 'harder' more prestigious subjects, such as physical science.

A small number of the highest performing private schools and conventional secondary schools account for a disproportionate proportion of University of Malawi entrants. Students in CDSS have a very small chance of going to the heavily subsidised national university, in 2010, only 0.3% of candidates for the MSCE exam from CDSS got into the university, while 4% from private schools and conventional schools were selected. One of the most interesting findings is that although secondary education overall is very gender unequal, private schools have very equal GPI terms of the exam candidates they enter. This corresponds with the findings from the case studies that suggest that entry into private schools is determined only by ability to pay, rather than other considerations, which we discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: A Synthesis of School Case Studies

Introduction

Case studies of 15 schools were used in this study to illustrate aspects of the private secondary education sector in Malawi. These were developed to complement analyses of secondary data sources. Data from the case studies was used to assist in the development of a more detailed analysis of the functioning of private secondary schools and to make comparisons of the strengths and weakness of private provision of secondary education. This chapter is a synthesis of the findings from the case studies. As indicated in Chapter 1, the case study schools were in four Education Districts namely: Zomba, Blantyre Urban, Blantyre Rural and Dedza. A discussion of the methodology followed in compiling these case studies is also in Chapter 1. For confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms for participating schools have been used throughout this report. Table XXX outlines the sampled private secondary schools by district.

Table 15 Case study Schools

Education District	Schools
Zomba	Grave Private Secondary School
	Location Private Secondary School
	Mzungu Private Secondary School
Blantyre Urban	Dwelling Private Secondary School
	Crack Private Secondary School
	Jungle Private Secondary School
	Rocky Private Secondary School
	Ideal Private Secondary School
	Effort Private Secondary School
Blantyre Rural	Airport Private Secondary School
	Tarmac Private Secondary School
Dedza	Hilly Private Secondary School
	Dambo Private Secondary School
	Trading Private Secondary School
	Foreign Private Secondary School

Similarly codes, for the respondents have been used in this report as follows:
MT = Male Teacher
FT = Female Teacher
HT = Head teacher
ML4 = Form 4 male learner
ML1 = Form 1 male learner
FL4 = Form 4 female learner
FL1 = Form 1 female learner

The case studies helped to identify differences and similarities between the case study schools, which were all in the for profit private secondary schools category. They were selected to represent the cheapest form of private secondary provision. They helped to illustrate some of the trends identified at national level in secondary data, flesh out some of the policy discussion and provide a level of detail that was missing from secondary data analysis.

We discuss the ownership and management of the schools, the learners, the learning and welfare of learners, the teachers, curriculum and finances of the schools. Our analysis of the case study schools indicated that management practices were very informal and depended heavily on the capacity, interest and honesty of the owner with few checks and balances in place to mitigate against malpractice. Our analysis of learners in these for profit private schools indicates that they are from among the top quintile by wealth of Malawian children. They mainly enrolled learners who had studied in public primary schools, but not achieved results that would allow them entry into selective high performing public secondary schools. Guardians of learners in such schools may also not have the money to afford good quality and high performing private secondary schools for their wards.

Teachers in the schools were mixed, they were mainly men, but included many unqualified teachers, some teachers were without post-secondary education and in some schools there were many part time teachers who were teaching simultaneously in government schools where they had a full time job, and in private schools during spare time. Pay and conditions of service of the teachers in these schools were poor, and significantly worse than in the government sector. Levels of teacher turnover were very high as teachers moved between schools in search of better pay and work conditions. Finances in the school were managed in opaque ways but our exploratory analysis indicates that some of these schools were generating significant profits.

The Case Study Schools

The general characteristics of the case study schools are outlined in Tables XXX, XXX and XXX below. The tables compare characteristics of the schools, their status and management, performance, size, teachers, learners and infrastructure. We have included the tuition fee per term and the boarding fee per term (where schools had boarding facilities). The average teacher's salary uses the monthly teacher's salary reported by the head teacher as being the average. Using the basic information provided by the head teacher of the schools and observations we computed the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) and the average class size. The average class size was a more useful figure than PTR as in these secondary schools different teachers teach specialist subjects. The important question for analysis was how many learners were in a classroom with one teacher at any one time. However the PTR may be useful for calculating profitability. We have also included the number of qualified teachers and male teachers.

We have specified whether the school had a water source, and of which sort. Where schools had a water source this was either piped, from a borehole or from a well. Piped water brings the water to the school from a municipal source into taps. A borehole is a carefully constructed water source, built with concrete and burnt bricks. It has some form of machinery that pumps water

from the ground after force has been applied to it through a pipe that extends to the surface (See the case study for Airport Secondary School for a picture of a borehole). Its water is usually clean and safe. A well is an open water source, which is often times manually dug in the ground (See appendix for case study of Trading Secondary School for a picture of a well). Its water is usually not safe. It needs to be treated to be made safe for drinking.

Finally we have included data on school infrastructure. This was drawn upon structured as well as incidental observations of the schools' buildings and infrastructure during the visits. We have included the numbers of boys and girls toilets, whether the school had a head teacher's office, staffroom, storeroom, computers, laboratory, library or electricity, and a subjective rating of building quality, focusing mainly on the classrooms. A school with 'Good' building quality was one where the walls, floor and roof were all permanent and in good condition, painted and not showing signs of decay and lack of maintenance such as cracks, graffiti and wear. The school was safe and comfortable for learners and teachers.

A school with average building quality was one where the walls, floor and roof were all permanent, but where there was evidence that they had not been maintained properly or were showing signs of decay and damage. The school was safe and comfortable for learners and teachers, but may not look and feel cared for. A school with poor building quality was one where the walls, floor and roof were of temporary construction and/or permanent construction that had not been finished properly, was under construction, had not been painted or had fallen into disrepair having not been maintained well, The school was not safe and comfortable for learners and teachers, and classrooms were often dark, unsuitable for learning and dirty. A school with very poor building quality was one where one or more of the walls, floor and roof were of temporary construction, where the classrooms were not fit for purpose. They may have been dirty, under construction, with holes or leaks in the roof, cracks in the walls, obvious and serious signs of decay and a total lack of maintenance. The classrooms were unhygienic, dangerous and uncomfortable. These schools were not suitable places for children to learn.

Table 16 Characteristics of case study schools

	Name of school				
	Grave	**Location**	**Mzungu**	**Dwelling**	**Crack**
School Type	Purpose built	Purpose built	Purpose built	Dwelling/purpose built	Purpose built
Ownership	Family owned	Family owned	Collection of business people	Family owned	Family owned
Day/Boarding	Day	Day	Day	Day	Day
Foundation Year	2003	2009	2009	1999	2012
Location	Zomba	Zomba	Zomba	Blantyre City	Blantyre city
Governing Body	No	No	No	No	No
Exam Centre	No	No	Yes	No	No
ISAMA Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Tuition Fee per term	7,000	6,000	14,000	5,500	30,000
Boarding fee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Av. Teachers Salary	18,500	16,000	35,000	14,500	35,000
Forms	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
Streams	1	1	1	1	1
No. of Teachers	8	7	16	6	9
No. of Qualified Teachers	2	2	16	0	5
No. of Male Teachers	8	6	12	6	8
Teacher Turnover	13%	29%	6%	67%	67%
No. of Part-time teachers	0	0	12	0	3
Number of learners 2012/13	180	158	149	349	66
% Male learners	49%	46%	69%	48%	55%
Average Class size	45	40	37	87	17
PTR	23:1	23:1	9:1	58:1	7:1
Performance (MSCE pass rate 2011/12)	31%	71%	69%	48%	42%
Selected to UNIMA	0	0	0	0	0
% with own desk	61%	21%	94%	6%	89%
% with no desk	30%	39%	4%	31%	11%
Head teacher's office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staffroom	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Storeroom	No	Yes	No	No	No
Computers	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Laboratory	No	No	No	No	yes
Library	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Electricity	No	No	No	No	Yes
Number of Boys' toilets	2	4	3	3	8
Number of Girls' toilets	2	4	3	3	8
Water source	Yes (piped)	Yes (piped)	Yes (piped)	No	Yes (piped)
Building Quality	Poor	Poor	Good	Poor	Good

Table 17 Characteristics of case study schools (continued)

	Name of school				
	Jungle	**Rocky**	**Airport**	**Tarmac**	**Ideal**
School Type	Purpose built	Purpose built	Purpose built	Purpose built	Purpose built
Ownership	Family owned	Family owned	Family owned	Family owned	Family owned
Day/Boarding	day	Day	Day	Day	Day
Foundation Year	1999	2001	2004	2	2002
Location	Blantyre city	Blantyre City	Blantyre rural	Blantyre rural	Blantyre City
Governing Body	No	No	No	No	No

Exam Centre	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
ISAMA Member	No	Yes	No	No	No
Tuition Fee per term	7,000	9,000	4,500	5,000	17,500
Boarding fee	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Av. Teachers Salary	27,000	2,000	20,000	10,000	55,000
Forms	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
Streams	1	1	1	1	1except 3&4 (3=2; 4 =3)
No. of Teachers	9	10	8	5	14
No. of Qualified Teachers	4	0	2	1	13
No. of Male Teachers	8	9	8	5	10
Teacher Turnover	33%	2%	25%	20%	7%
No. of Part-time teachers	0	0	2	2	0
Number of learners 2012/13	316	207	255	27	483
% Male learners	51%	52%	54.5%	37%	47%
Average Class size	79	52	64	7	69
PTR	35:1	21:1	32:1	5:1	35:1
Performance (MSCE pass rate 2011/12)	57%	64%	70.9%	N/A	76%
Selected to UNIMA	0	0	0	N/A	5
% with own desk	47%	65%	18%	0%	23%
% with no desk	15%	28%	58%	0%	69%
Head teacher's office	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Staffroom	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Storeroom	Yes	No	No	No	No
Computers	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Laboratory	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Library	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Electricity	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Number of Boys' toilets	8	3	8	2	8
Number of Girls' toilets	6	3	0	2	6
Water source	Yes (piped)	Yes (borehole)	Yes (borehole)	No	Yes (piped)
Building Quality	Good	Very poor	Average	Very poor	Good

Table 18 Characteristics of case study schools (continued)

	Name of school				
	Effort	**Hilly**	**Trading**	**Dambo**	**Foreign**
School Type	Purpose built	Purpose built	Purpose built	Commercial	Purpose built
Ownership	Family owned	Family owned	Family owned	Trust	Family owned

Day/Boarding	Day	Boarding/Day	Boarding/Day	Boarding/Day	Day
Foundation Year	1997	2004	2006	2	2012
Location	Blantyre City	Dedza	Dedza	Dedza	Dedza
Governing Body	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Exam Centre	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
ISAMA Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Tuition Fee per term	10,500	8,000	10,000	7,500	14,000
Boarding fee	N/A	32,000	30,000	N/A	N/A
Av. Teachers Salary	40,000	35,000	40,000	14,000	25,000
Forms Available	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
Streams	1	1	1	1	1
Number of Teachers	15	8	9	9	9
No. of Qualified Teachers	6	3	2	6	9
No. of Male Teachers	14	8	8	9	8
Teacher Turnover	0%	0%	67%	18%	0%
No. of Part-time teachers	0	2	1	2	6
Number of learners 2012/13	302	65	140	133	32
% Male learners	43%	57%	51%	52%	38%
Average Class size	76	16	35	33	8
PTR	20:1	8:1	16:1	15:1	4:1
Performance (MSCE pass rate	76%	64%	78.6%	43%	NA
Selected to UNIMA	5	0	0	0	NA
% with own desk	18%	50%	16%	24%	94%
% with no desk	33%	34%	57%	0%	0%
Head teacher's office	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staffroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Storeroom	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Computers	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Laboratory	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Library	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electricity	No	No	Yes	No	No
Number of Boys' toilets	4	2	6	2	3
Number of Girls' toilets	4	1	4	2	4
Water source	No	No	Yes (well)	Yes (piped)	Yes (piped)
Building Quality	Poor	Average	Good	Average	Good

From Tables XXX, XXX and XXX a number of characteristics become clear. This section highlights these characteristics of the case study schools under the following six major thematic areas: ownership and management; learners; teachers; infrastructure; curriculum and financial issues.

Ownership and management

All but two case study schools were family owned. Dambo private secondary school was run as a trust while Mzungu private secondary school was managed by a group of businessmen. The individual owners act as sole proprietors with little accountability and they consider themselves to be the governing bodies though they have no independent representation. Nine of the 15 schools were registered with the Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA). Those that were not registered with ISAMA gave different reasons for not doing so. Some said they were still contemplating registering while others seemed not to be sure of the benefits of being a member of ISAMA. Those that were loyal to the Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM) felt there were issues that needed to be ironed out first between ISAMA and PRISAM before they could think of joining ISAMA.

Tuition fees varied over a wide range from MK 4,500[4] to MK 30,000 per learner per term for day secondary schools. For those schools such as Hilly and Trading Secondary Schools that had boarding facilities, the boarding fee was MK 32,000 and K30, 000 respectively.

The case study schools varied in size from very small with 27 learners to over 483. The schools with very few learners were very recently established schools as such they had not yet built up pupil numbers. Nevertheless they had hope of increases in enrolment in the near future. Average class sizes ranged from 7 to 87, and pupil teacher ratios from 4:1 to 58:1. All the sampled schools teach Forms 1-4. All but one case study schools had one stream in each of the forms, meaning that each form had only one class. Due to high enrolment at Ideal Private Secondary School, the school had 2 streams in Form 3 and 3 streams in form 4. These patterns shift from year to year as enrolments fluctuate.

The availability of learning materials, buildings and other facilities varied from completely inadequate to good in ways associated with fee levels. These for profit private secondary schools appeared to be poorly resourced in terms of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and science equipment. The quality of the buildings was also a problem in most of the schools especially the toilets. Ventilation and lighting was poor in some of the classrooms.

Data management by schools was inconsistent. In some schools the head teacher was able to find and interpret enrolment, migration and dropout data easily, while in others such data was not available, not recorded or not made public. While all the schools had data on enrolments in the current academic year, only five of the fifteen schools had data on enrolments for the last five years. Only six of the fifteen had data on dropout for the last two years and only five had data on learner migration into and out of the school in the last complete academic year.

[4] A dollar was equal to about MK 400 in May 2013

Learners

The catchment area in these for profit day private secondary schools was mostly local as learners came from areas close to the school. Most of the learners walked to the schools, others rode bicycles and a few others travelled on paid minibuses, especially in towns. These learners were either not selected for government secondary schools, or were poached from near-by Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSSs) and other for profit private schools. Learners from Community Day Secondary Schools who joined private secondary schools claimed that there was a better teaching and learning environment in private schools when compared to CDSSs. In one of the focus group discussions with the learners it was commented that

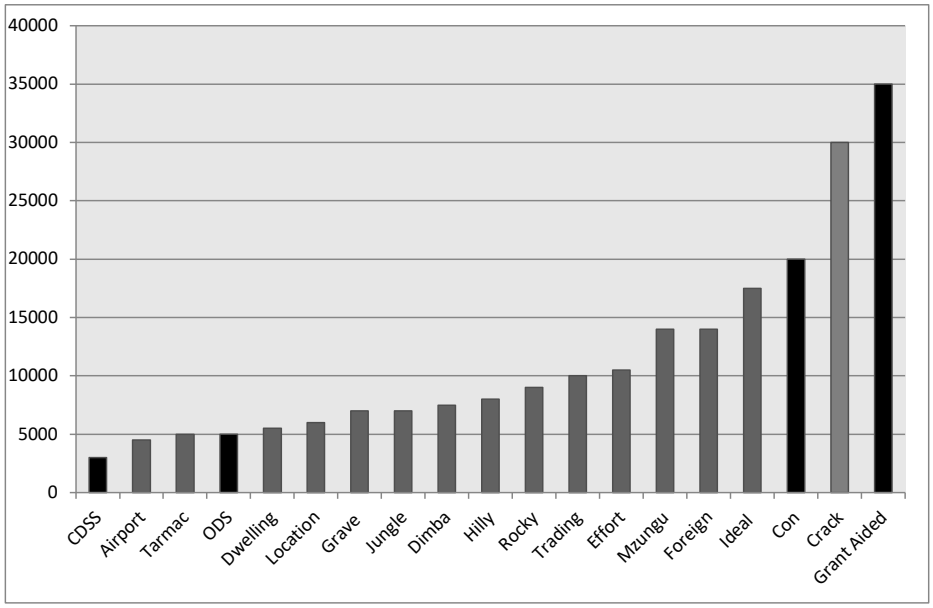
> Teachers in CDSSs are lazy. They may be qualified but they are not hard working. More often they do not report for classes. Learners end up learning very few subjects in a day due to teacher absenteeism. In private secondary schools, teachers are hard-working because the director monitors them and ensures that they teach. They know that if they misbehave, they can be dismissed anytime. So in this respect, learners would rather go to a private secondary school than to a CDSS. Those who are in CDSSs, have no option, they cannot afford the fees in private secondary schools (ML4, Dambo private secondary school).

A head teacher at one of the schools visited alluded to the same in one of the interviews and said that:

> Learners for this school come straight from the primary schools when they are not selected to go to government secondary schools. Nevertheless we also have learners who shun the Community Day Secondary Schools. They claim that private secondary schools teach much better than Community Day Secondary Schools (HT, Effort Secondary School).

This may or may not have been true. These interviewees, who have already chosen in favour of private schools are of course likely to affirm the choice. However, it illustrates some of the discourses that surround the emergence of private secondary schools and school choice. From what has been discussed about learners in for profit private secondary schools, it is clear that many of the learners enrol in such schools because that was their only chance of accessing secondary education as access into government secondary schools is limited to a relatively small number of learners who get good passes in national examinations. Some learners that were selected to government CDSSs do abandon them for private schools; but they only do so after being dissatisfied with the teaching and learning environment in the CDSSs. Similarly learners move from one for profit private school to another in search of better academic results. The lowest cost private secondary schools compete directly for learners with nearby CDSSs and other for profit private secondary schools as they are within the same tuition fee band (see Table XXX for the tuition fee bands in different categories of government secondary schools).

Figure 14 Fees in Case study schools alongside government school fees



Access to secondary school is rationed by price and academic performance. Where there is a choice of school between several competing schools, choice depends on academic standing and examination results, price, location, and general reputation.

Enrolments in for profit private schools are volatile and change from year to year with a large turnover of learners who arrived and left within the year (Table XXX and XXX). This means that the majority of those enrolled in a particular grade may not have been in the school the previous year. Across the case study schools, the trend in overall average enrolment was down from a peak in 2009. Where there is choice, in and around urban areas, parents and learners seem to shop around for the best arrangements as some schools become popular and others fail. In urban areas there may be a choice of schools within easy travelling distance. In most cases however, the available, affordable options to parents are very limited. Travel beyond a short distance to and from school is difficult, time consuming and costly.

Table 19 Enrolments in case study schools by year

	2008	**2009**	**2010-11**	**2011-12**	**2013-13**
Dwelling	239	305	247	228	349
Jungle					316
Airport	154	199	219	235	255

Trading					140
Tarmac					27
Hilly					65
Grave			101	170	180
Foreign					32
Effort	403	394	369	348	302
Crack				50	66
Rocky	210	319	355	280	207
Ideal					483
Dambo	102	130	152	130	133
Mzungu		71	135	164	149
Location			197	160	158
Average	**222**	**236**	**222**	**196**	**191**

We asked schools for data on dropout and students migration (that is transfers from one school to another). Only six of the 15 case study schools had available data on these issues for the previous complete academic year. These show very high rates of students dropping out and leaving or joining the school to/from other schools. The level of fluctuation of learners is extreme. We calculate rates of dropout and migration by dividing the number of in and out migrants and dropouts by the total enrolments for the school in the year. In some schools one fifth of learners drop out every year, while a fifth join from other schools, average in migration in five of the case study schools in 2011/12 was 15%. Average dropout in six of the case study schools was 21% in 2011/12. We present the results in Table XXX.

Table 20 Dropout and migration in case study schools

	in migration 2011/12	out migration 2011/12	dropout 2010/11	dropout 2011/12
Grave	9%	14%	23%	45%
Effort	11%	8%	9%	12%
Rocky	7%	8%	7%	10%
Dambo	22%	21%	20%	35%
Mzungu	25%	9%	11%	13%
Location			15%	12%
Average	15%	12%	14%	21%

Learners in the focus group discussions at Rocky Secondary School discussed how they shopped around and evaluated other schools.

> Jungle secondary school is a much better school. It has a good teaching and learning environment, but it is a bit far from our location. Our parents cannot afford the travel

> expenses; hence, I for one had no choice but to register with this school (FL1, Rocky Secondary school)

Most private secondary schools appear to have no admission requirements except the ability to pay admission and tuition fees. Academic performance, gender or age do not seem to be selection criteria for private schools. Directors and head teachers were open about selection purely on the ability to pay. One of them hinted that

> We are in business; as such we welcome anybody who is interested to learn at our school. We do not consider age, gender or even performance. What we ensure during admission of the learners is that they fill a registration form and sign the form as evidence that they will abide by the rules and regulations of the school (Director, Airport Private Secondary School)

Table 21 GPI for case study school enrolments

	2008	2009	2010-11	2011-12	2013-13	5 year Average	
Dwelling	1.19	1.03	1.17	1.17	1.10		1.13
Jungle					0.85		0.85
Airport	1.41	1.29	1.31	1.70	0.83		1.31
Trading					0.94		0.94
Tarmac					1.70		1.70
Hilly					0.76		0.76
Grave			0.88	0.93	1.05		0.95
Foreign					1.67		1.67
Effort	1.05	1.07	1.11	1.12	1		1.07
Crack				0.61	0.83		0.72
Rocky	1.13	0.75	0.78	0.92	0.92		0.90
Ideal					1.14		1.14
Dambo	0.76	0.81	0.67	0.78	0.93		0.79
Mzungu		0.97	1.29	1.16	1.16		1.14
Location			0.71	0.70	1.19		0.87
Average	1.11	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.07		1.03

Gender Parity indices in case study schools illustrated that some schools had greater numbers of boys and others greater numbers of girls (Table XXX). The average of all schools in most years was very close to parity, as the MSCE entrant figures for private schools indicate is the case for the sector as a whole. The fluctuations in GPI between years in schools are a further indication of the volatility of the student population. It was also noted at some of the schools visited that married people were enrolled. Some of the learners were over 25 years old and one was as old as 34 years.

Schooling history

Table XXX shows the types of schools that the learners who took part in the survey attended in each grade of primary school. This helps us to understand the transitions that are taking place in the schooling histories of children in for profit private schools and therefore to understand some of the choices that parents and children have to make.

Table 22 Type of primary school attended by learners

Grade	Private		Government		Grant aided		Mixed	
	Form 1	Form 4	Form 1	Form 4	Form 1	Form 4	Form 1	Form 4
Std 1	21.4%	17.4%	74.7%	79.6%	0.8%	2.6%	3.1%	0.4%
Std 2	20.1%	16.0%	75.2%	80.8%	0.8%	2.6%	3.9%	0.6%
Std 3	19.9%	16.8%	77.0%	79.8%	0.8%	2.2%	2.3%	1.2%
Std 4	15.4%	17.3%	82.0%	79.6%	1.2%	2.0%	1.4%	1.2%
Std 5	13.2%	16.7%	84.5%	80.2%	1.4%	2.8%	0.8%	0.4%
Std 6	11.1%	16.2%	86.4%	79.8%	1.4%	2.8%	1.0%	1.2%
Std 7	12.3%	14.6%	85.4%	81.6%	1.4%	3.4%	0.8%	0.4%
Std 8	13.2%	13.2%	84.5%	82.6%	1.4%	3.6%	0.8%	0.4%

The learners in these for profit private secondary schools overwhelmingly (81%) attended government primary schools. Many of them attended private schools only at secondary level, perhaps after not achieving the necessary performance to be selected for government secondary schools. There was a small level of attendance in all grades of more than one school in a year (mixed) and of grant-aided or mission schools. This clearly shows that access into government secondary schools is limited to few learners thereby creating demand for private secondary schools.

Education status of the parents of learners

Table XXX shows the levels of education of the parents of learners in the sample of for profit private schools. It compares them to the national figures and figures for Blantyre from the 2010 DHS. Blantyre was chosen for this comparison, as many of the schools were in Blantyre, it is the largest city, the wealthiest area and the district with the highest net enrolment ratio at secondary level. The comparison is not entirely perfect, as the categories in the learner's survey and in the DHS do not map entirely. The DHS has categories for 'completed primary' rather than 'Has PLSCE', 'some secondary' rather than 'Has JCE', 'completed secondary' rather than 'Has MSCE'. In addition the DHS categories are for all men and women nationally rather than the parents of learners of secondary school age. However the categories are roughly equivalent and allow a comparison, which gives a further indication of the socio-economic position of the learners in these for profit private schools.

Table 23 Education status of parents

	Schooling status of Mother		DHS 2010 Malawi Female	DHS 2010 Blantyre Female	Schooling status of Father		DHS 2010 Male	DHS 2010 Blantyre Male
	N	**%**	**%**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Did not attend school	64	6%	19%	9%	25	3%	11%	6%
Did not complete primary	310	31%	64%	55%	141	14%	65%	50%
Has PSLCE	136	14%	7%	7%	79	8%	7%	5%
Has JCE	150	15%	7%	14%	105	11%	9%	17%
Has MSCE	205	21%	3%	9%	282	28%	6%	15%
Has post-secondary education	114	11%	1%	5%	341	34%	2%	7%
Don't know	19	2%	0%	0%	25	3%	0%	0%
Total	**998**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**998**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

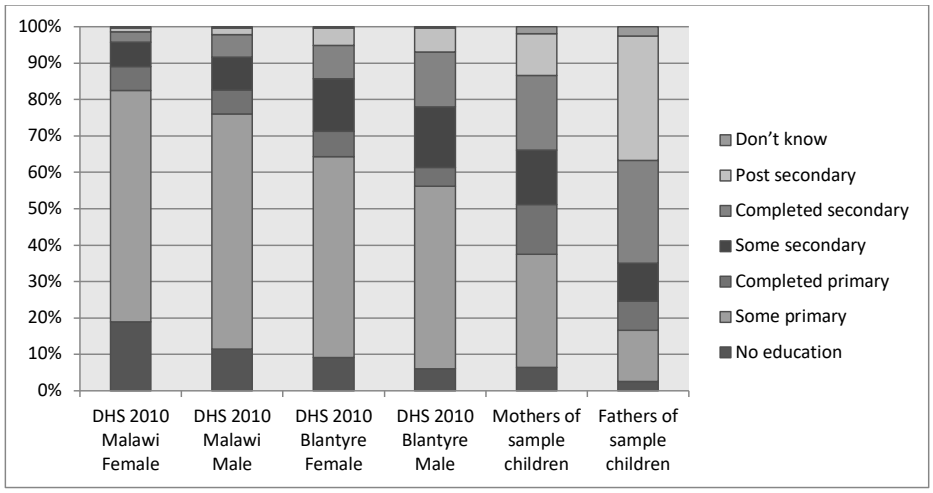
Table XXX illustrates that learners in the case study schools come from better-educated families than most Malawians. This is a strong indication that they are from more wealthy backgrounds and that they are more likely to succeed in education regardless of which school type they attend as parental education is such a strong indicator of educational attainment.

Figures XXX and XXX illustrate this further. In Figure XXX, the different samples are arranged in order of rates of post-secondary education running from lowest on the left (Malawian females) and the highest on the right (fathers of learners in case study schools). This shows the very high levels of post-secondary education among fathers and mothers of the sampled learners. It also shows the huge rates of primary dropout in the country affecting all groups, but especially the national figure with more than 60% of men and women having attended but failed to complete primary education. Clearly the parents of learners in for profit private schools come from among the best-educated and most privileged sections of society.

Thirty-four per cent of fathers of the learners in the sample had some post-secondary education, compared to just 2% of men nationally. Sixty-five per cent of all Malawian men from the 2010 DHS sample had some primary education, compared to just 15% of the sample learner's fathers. If we take Blantyre, as the district with the highest levels of secondary education in the country, to compare to the sample learners rather than the whole country, we still see the same pattern. The learners in these for profit private schools come from relatively well educated families with

very high levels of parents having secondary or post-secondary education compared to the national averages and the average in the wealthiest urban area with the best secondary education rates.

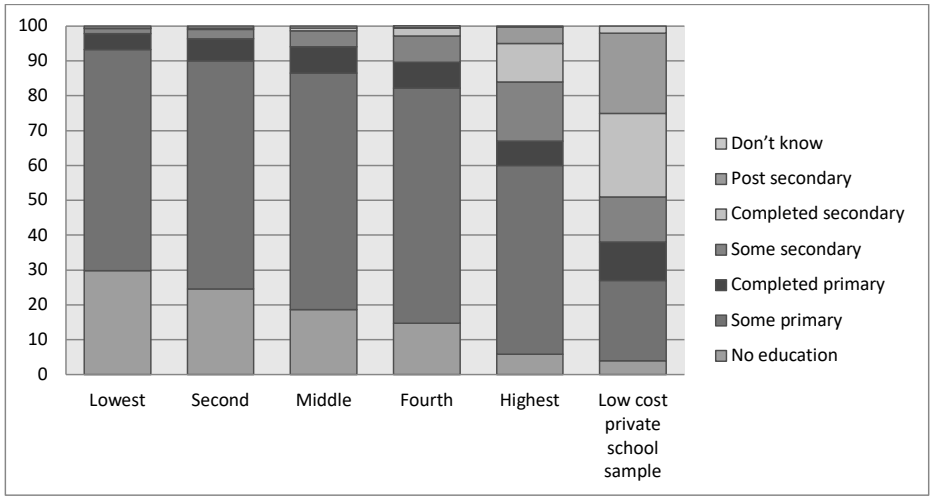
Figure 15 Level of education of parents in for profit private schools, among Malawian adults and Blantyre adults



Source: DHS 2010 and private school children survey

When we compare the levels of education of the parents of the learners in the for profit private school sample with the levels of education nationally by wealth quintile we can see that they are from a better educated group even than the top quintile by wealth from the DHS 2010 sample (Figure XXX). We can conclude from this and the analysis of the possession of durable household goods that this sample of for profit private school learners is drawn from among the top quintile by wealth in Malawi. We can also see that secondary education in any type of school is really only common on any scale among the top two quintiles by wealth in the country. Around 10% of the second richest quintile have attended any secondary education at all, and just over 30% of the top quintile have attended any secondary (Figure XXX).

Figure 16 Level of education of parents in for profit private schools, among Malawian adults by wealth quintile



Source: DHS 2010 and private school children survey

Household assets possessed by learners' households

Table XXX and Figure XXX show the household durable goods that learners in the sample of for profit private schools have in the households they come from. In addition to the data about the education of parents above, this helps us to place the learners into the socio-economic context of Malawi using the 2010 nationally representative DHS survey, which measures the possession of these household durable goods at household and individual level across Malawi. We asked learners to report not on their own possession of these items but of their possession in their household. We then compared these to the possession of the items in households at national level.

Table 24 Household durable goods

Household item	**Availability of the household items in sample learners' households**		**Malawi DHS 2010**
	N	**%**	**%**
Radio	869	88.0%	53.2%
Television	643	65.5%	10.8%
Mobile telephone	846	85.6%	39.0%
Non-mobile telephone	216	22.7%	2.0%
Refrigerator	426	44.1%	3.7%

Bicycle	541	55.8%	43.8%
Ox cart	57	6.1%	2.1%
Motorcycle/scooter	99	10.5%	1.2%
Car / truck	234	24.5%	1.7%

The results of this comparison show that higher proportions of sample learners possessed all these items in their households than the national average. This shows that they came from affluent backgrounds and places many of them among the richest families in Malawi. For example, while 4% of Malawian households had a refrigerator in 2010, 42% of the learners in these for profit private schools lived in households with a refrigerator. Two per cent of Malawian households had a car or truck in 2010, in this sample, 24% lived in households with a car or truck. What this indicates is that even in these for profit private schools, the learners were drawn overwhelmingly from households who are among the top quintile by wealth in Malawi. Figure XXX illustrates this.

Figure 17 Household durable goods

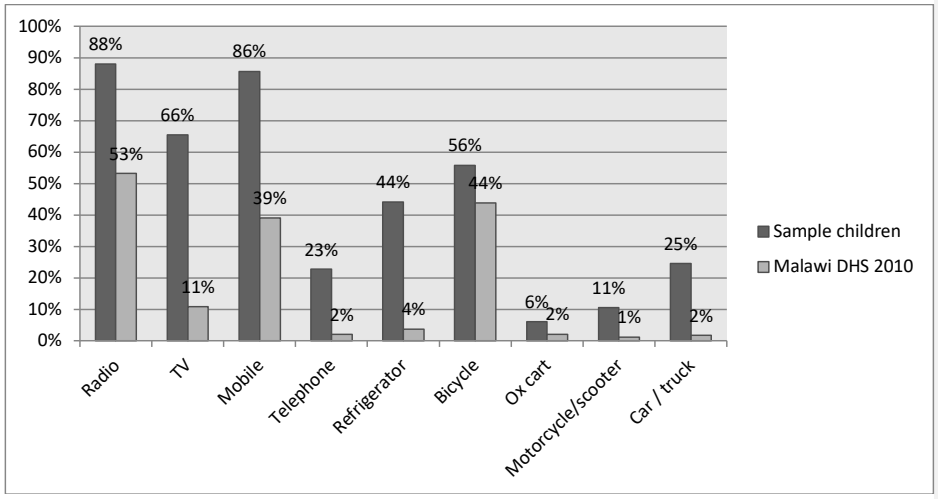


Table 25 Percentage availability of durable goods by school

	Radio	TV	Mobile phone	Non-mobile phone	Refrigerator	Bicycle	Oxcart	Motorcycle	Car / Truck
Grave	94	61	88	33	33	61	3	3	10
Location	89	39	82	14	21	71	7	11	4
Mzungu	86	90	91	34	68	64	7	11	34
Dwelling	93	56	78	33	28	59	6	14	13
Crack	91	94	91	59	94	26	0	13	86
Jungle	87	76	86	21	50	52	1	7	28
Rocky	79	68	90	13	30	42	4	8	15
Airport	80	41	78	3	23	63	0	1	9
Tarmac	100	40	60	0	20	100	0	0	0
Ideal	89	83	88	27	68	41	2	4	41
Effort	85	72	88	23	51	41	9	9	22
Hilly	91	41	82	7	27	81	12	16	7
Trading	100	60	93	21	31	89	29	43	39
Dambo	91	19	80	6	9	80	15	13	9
Foreign	100	75	88	44	63	69	6	31	25

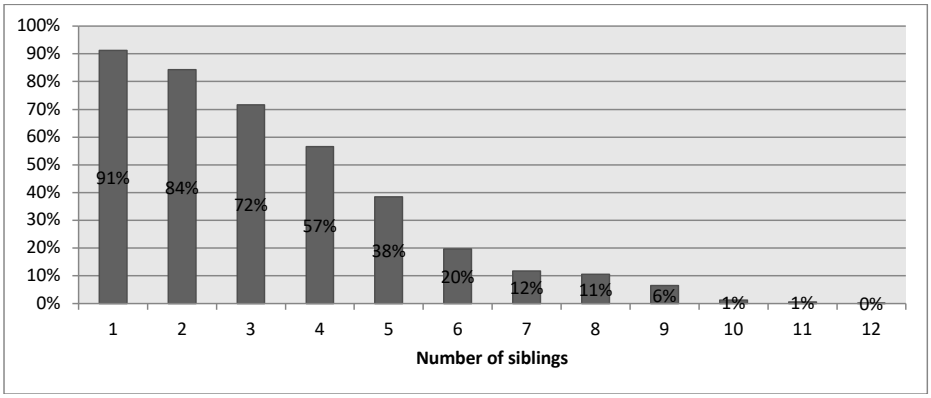
Table XXX shows the availability of household durable goods by school, illustrating that there was considerable variation between schools. Crack school for example had very high rates of learners coming from households with refrigerator and car ownership, placing the families of its learners among the very wealthiest households in the country. It is notable that Crack school is the only school in the sample to be in band C in terms of fees, with the highest fees in the sample. This illustrates powerfully the stratifying and sorting effect that fees have on enrolments. Tarmac School meanwhile had very high rates of radio and Bicycle ownership, but much lower rates of refrigerator and no learners reporting that their families owned a car, showing that the learners in that school came from a group of people that was relatively less wealthy, than Crack school. They are from a different socio-economic group, not as wealthy as those in Crack school, but still wealthy in national terms. These schools represented perhaps two different ends of the for profit private school category. Crack was in urban Blantyre and had the highest fees in our sample, it was clearly patronised by a wealthier group of people than others. Tarmac was in rural Blantyre and was among the cheapest in terms of fees.

The evidence gathered in this study overrides the assumption that for profit private secondary schools provide access to the poor, as the data gathered indicates that most learners attending these for profit private secondary schools are from among the top two quintiles by wealth in the country. Poor people in Malawi cannot afford the tuition fees in any type of secondary school, even the cheapest for profit private secondary schools.

Siblings of learners

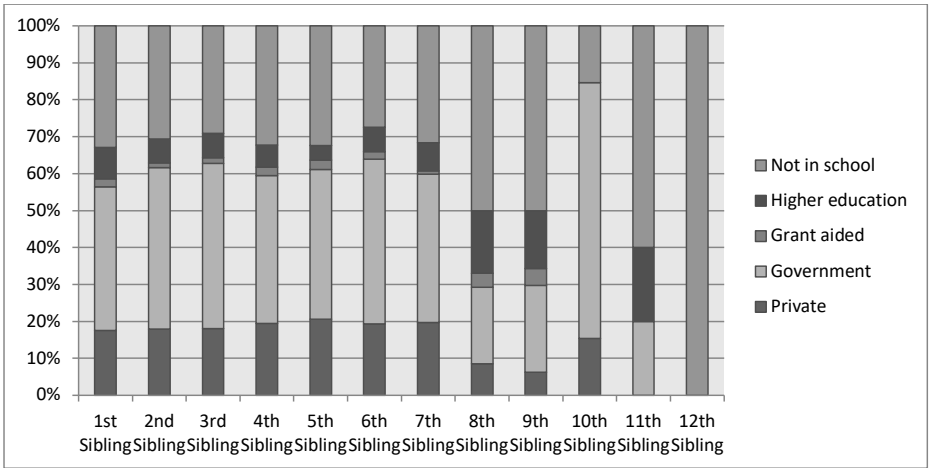
Learners were asked which type of school their siblings went to. The question included an option for siblings who were not in school, or were attending higher education. Learners categorised a total of 3,917 siblings, of whom 1,995 were brothers and 1,922 were sisters. Unfortunately the category for out of school did not discriminate between those who were of school age and those who were not. However, the data does provide sibling order. The vast majority of the learners had a brother or a sister (91%), 57% had four or more siblings and 6% had nine or more (Figure XXX).

Figure 18 Number of siblings (cumulative percentages)



The pattern of attendance of different school types was remarkably stable among the first to seventh sibling. Thereafter, sample size became much smaller and the pattern became more erratic. Of all siblings, 14% attended private schools, 35% attended government schools, 2% attended grant aided schools, 8% were in higher education and 41% were not in school. However it was not possible to say whether they were not in school because they were adults and were working, because they had dropped out of school or because they were too young. If we analysed only the first to seventh siblings, 19% are attending private schools, 42% government schools, 2% grant aided schools, 7% in higher education and 31% are not in school. The differences between brothers and sisters in the type of school they attended are negligible.

Figure 19 Type of school attended by siblings



Learner migration

In order to see if students in for profit private schools came from families who had migrated, we asked learners to indicate whether their parents were both born in the district in which they now went to school, and whether they had attended a primary school in another district from the one in which they now attended secondary school. In order to avoid confusion we have taken all the learners in boarding schools out of the results, so that the results reported below include only learners in day schools.

Less than half of the learners had attended primary and secondary school in the same district, 51% had attended a primary school in a different district from the one where they now attended secondary school (Table XXX). Seventy eight per cent of the learners reported that their parents were both not from the district where they now attended secondary school (Table XXX). This indicates that about half of the learners had moved district within their lifetime, and 78% of the parents of the learners in the sample had moved within their lifetime.

Some of the learners may have moved to live with relatives perhaps for the purpose of education. However this does indicate a very high level of mobility among sample learners' households. It may also indicate that for some children who are internal or international migrants, private schooling is their only option at secondary level. This is something that needs further research.

Table 26 Number of learners who attended primary school in another district by gender

	Boys	Girls	Total	Per cent
Ever attended primary in another district	209	220	429	51%

Never attended primary in another district	217	203	420	49%
Total	**426**	**423**	**849**	**100%**

Table 27 Number of learners whose parents were both from sample district by gender

	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Per cent**
Both parents from sample district	89	95	184	22%
Both parents not from sample district	337	329	666	78%
Total	**426**	**424**	**850**	**100%**

Learning and Welfare

In this section we discuss the factors and issues that affect the teaching and learning process, and therefore academic performance in the case study schools.

Private schools recognize that their survival depends on a continued supply of learners. Much of the perception of a school as being of good quality relies on the exam results. Exam results are publicised and were said to be what attracted learners to the school. These were mainly measured in terms of the pass rates in the national JCE and MSCE exams. Another measure of success is the number of learners that are selected from a secondary school to the University of Malawi and University of Mzuzu, the two large public universities in the country (which we discussed in chapter 4). The selection criteria to these universities are, like the selection to secondary schools, based on performance in national exams. Getting good results in national examinations increases the probability of being selected to the university. This makes selection to the universities difficult for many of these for profit private schools, considering the calibre of learners they attract and the conditions in which they teach and learn. In-fact only two of the 15 sampled private schools had managed to send learners to the university in the previous academic year (2011/2012). No learner from the other schools was selected to the university.

Interviews with teachers revealed that large proportions of learners in private schools had come to the schools having achieved results in their primary leaving exams that were too low for them to be accepted for selective government secondary schools. Some had enrolled after having failed their secondary level exams in another school, with the ambition to retake the exams and achieve higher grades. In addition, some of them had come to private schools after being excluded from other schools for disciplinary reasons. The general impression of teachers about learners in private schools is that learners are intellectually weak, had bad behaviour and needed constant encouragement and spoon-feeding for them to succeed. One of the teachers in the schools visited commented that:

> The calibre of learners that get enrolled in private secondary schools leaves a lot to be desired. They are like rejects, those that did not formally make it to the next level of education. This makes teaching in private secondary schools difficult as the learners need

to be spoon-fed and drilled if they are to do well in their national exams (MT, Grave secondary school).

Age in Grade

Table XXX shows the age range of learners in Form 1 and Form 4 in the sample schools who participated in the learner's survey. This shows that the age range is very wide in both forms in the sample schools. The expected age for Form 1 learners is 13 or 14 and the expected age for Form 4 pupils is 17 or 18. In this sample the ages of learners in Form 1 were between 11 and 24, and in Form 4, between 14 and 34. The average age in Form 1 was 15 and the average age in Form 4 was 19. In both forms, the majority of the learners were not within the expected age for the grade they were in. Though the average age of girls in both forms was slightly lower than that of boys, the differences were not statistically significant (Table XXX).

Table 28 Average age of Form 1 and Form 4 learners

Form	**Average age**		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total average**
Form 1	15.75	14.96	15.34
Form 4	19.19	18.54	18.88

In Form 1, only 30% of the learners were the correct age for their grade, 38% of girls and 22% of boys. In Form 4, 42% of learners were the correct age for their grade, 50% of girls and 35% of boys. This and the distribution histograms below in Figures XXX and XXX indicate that there are more overage boys in the sample than girls. The grey boxes on the graphs indicate the expected age of learners in these forms, showing that the majority of learners are significantly overage for their grade. The data also show that the age range in Form 4 (20 years) is wider than in Form 1 (13 years).

Table 29 Age range of learners in Form 1 and 4 in sample schools

	Form 1		**Form 4**	
	Boys	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Girls**
Minimum age	11	11	15	14
Maximum age	24	24	34	32

Figure 20 Age distribution of Form 1 learners

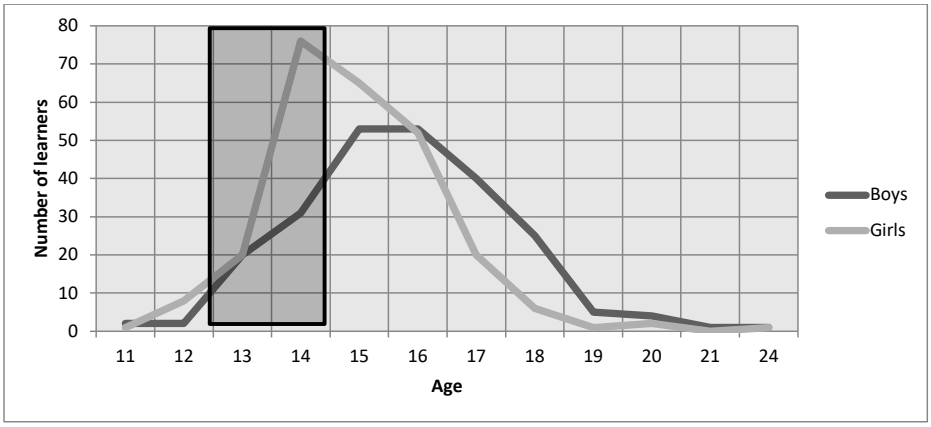
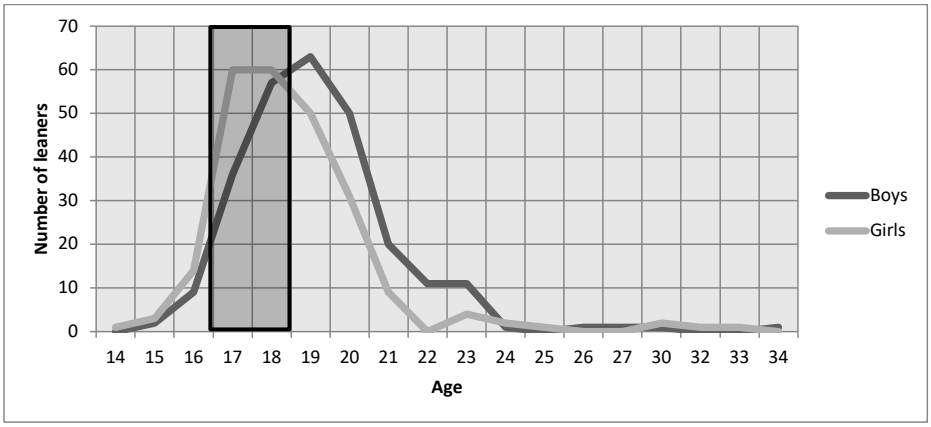


Figure 21 Age distribution of Form 4 learners



These are self-reported ages and contain a margin of error, as birth certificates and accurate recording of ages is not universal. However, even taking this into account, the range of ages in these classes is remarkable, and was confirmed by observations of the classes, and interviews with head teachers and class teachers during the research. They reported that some of their learners were married and attending school in an attempt to get qualifications which would further their career prospects. This was confirmed by one of the directors of the visited schools who indicated that:

> Some of the learners at this school are married. If you visit the classes you will find that some learners are in their late twenties and even in their thirties. They say they want to improve their grades so that they can find a job for them to take good care of their families (Director, Dwelling Secondary School).

Some learners in private schools may choose to progress through the grades faster than the expected rate as each extra year of schooling in a private school entails costs for their parents. Learners may also be several years overage, having started school late or repeated years of education. In addition, learners reported that some of them who had failed exams in other schools or not received the grades that they wished for had entered these for profit private schools to prepare them for taking the exams again in the hope of passing. This also explains the higher enrolments in several schools in Form 4. In fact when learners were asked about what attracted them to the school, some of them mentioned that they wanted to rewrite their national exams with the hope of improving their grades for better chances of being selected to the university or finding employment in future.

Private Tuition

In addition to attending these for profit private schools, some learners attended private tuition after school. Table XXX reports the number of learners in for profit private school sample who attended private tutoring after school, which is known in Malawi as 'part time teaching'. The majority (85%) of the learners did not attend part time teaching; however, a significant minority (15%) reported that they did. There did not appear to be a significant gender different between those that attended part time teaching and those that did not.

Table 30 Private tuition

	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Percent**
Learners who attended part time teaching after school	79	72	151	15%
Learners who did not attend part time teaching after school	425	415	840	85%
Total	**504**	**487**	**991**	

Those that did attend part time reported that they paid between MK 150 to MK 10,000 per learner per month. It is hard to believe that any part time tutors would charge MK 150, and it is also easy to imagine that learners may not know exactly how much their parents paid to tutors. The most commonly reported amounts were MK 1,500 and MK 2,500 per learner per month.

Teachers

Teachers in the case study schools varied widely. An average of 44% of the teachers in the fifteen schools were not qualified to teach in secondary schools. We draw a distinction between being a qualified teacher (whether the teacher has a specialised teacher training qualification) and level of education (whether the teacher was educated to secondary, diploma or degree level). Not a

single school had entire teaching staff that was qualified. Some of them were educated to degree level (in subjects unrelated to education) and some only had secondary level education. Most of these under-qualified teachers were young and had been attracted by the opportunity to work in circumstances where jobs and opportunities to train as a secondary school teacher were scarce. There were also some teachers who had retired from government service, and now taught in private schools to supplement their pensions. These teachers were fully qualified. An average of 20% of teachers in the fifteen schools were working part time while also teaching in government schools. The average masks the fact that the figure was 75% of 67% in two schools (in urban areas near a government secondary school) but the practice did not happen in more remote schools.

While the sample of learners is evenly divided by gender; the vast majority of teachers were men. This may indicate that men are exploiting the problem of lack of teachers and are taking these opportunities of extra jobs in private schools, or it may indicate a preference by school management for male teachers. Levels of turnover of teachers were very high in the schools, with some schools reaching as high as 67% in some schools, but averaging 24% across the 15 schools. Turnover is defined as the percentage of total teachers who left the school in or at the end of the last academic year.

Table 31 Teacher turnover in case study schools

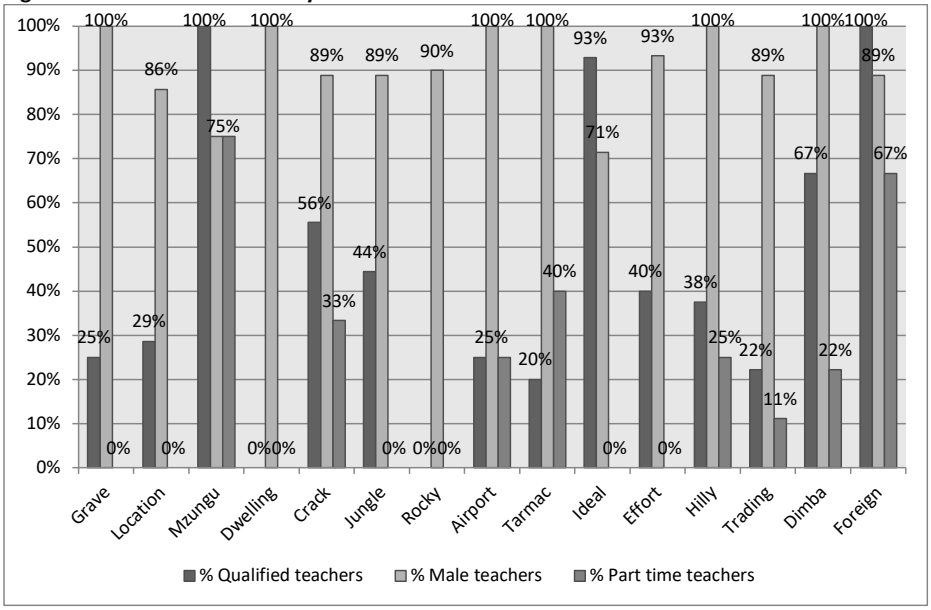
School	Teacher Turnover
Grave	13%
Location	29%
Mzungu	6%
Dwelling	67%
Crack	67%
Jungle	33%
Rocky	2%
Airport	25%
Tarmac	20%
Ideal	7%
Effort	0%
Hilly	0%
Trading	67%
Dambo	18%
Foreign	0%
Average	24%

Teachers' salaries in case study schools varied from about MK 14,000 to MK 55,000 per month. This is far less than what a government secondary school teacher earns. Salaries in government secondary schools are set nationally and start at about MK 60,000 and may go up to over MK

100,000 depending on years of experience, level of qualification and grade of employment. Additionally, teachers in government schools receive significant non-salary benefits such as leave grant (extra money for holidays), housing allowances, pensions and in service training for professional development. In the case study schools teachers did not receive any of these benefits. Instead, in some of the schools visited, teachers received incentives for good performance, which is usually measured by learner performance in national exams such as the MSCE. As these exam results are linked to the popularity and therefore enrolment of the school, they have direct consequences for the income of the school. These motivate teachers but run the risk of encouraging 'teaching to the test' which can increase test scores in the short term but may not lead to sustained increased learning in the long run (Glewwe, Ilias and Kremer, 2010). These incentives also create strong incentives for teachers and private schools to cheat in national exams, an issue which has become a problem in Malawi in recent years.

Like in the government system, salaries in the case study schools also depended on the level of qualification of the teacher, and the level of experience. In addition, significant proportions of teachers in some of the schools were part time teachers, meaning that they had a full time job in a government secondary school, but also taught in private secondary schools, paid by the hour. Payment by the hour in the sampled schools ranged from MK 500 to MK 770 per hour per teacher. This arrangement supposedly helped the schools to maintain minimum requirements on the proportion of teachers at a school who must be qualified.

Figure 22 Teachers in case study schools



The main reason given for working in these private secondary schools was lack of jobs on the job market. Teachers emphasized that given a choice they would rather teach in government schools where salaries were high and job security guaranteed. In addition they mentioned that they would prefer to work in government schools where they would have well established career development opportunities. We discuss these in turn.

The highest paid qualified teacher with a diploma in the case study schools earned about MK 45,000 a month when all benefits were included, though this did not apply across all cases and in most case study schools, the salaries were less than MK 25,000. This can be compared to over MK 60,000 in government secondary schools. This had contributed to some instability in staffing levels at the schools as teachers were always on the look-out for better paying jobs in other organisations or were moving to other private schools that paid better salaries than their current schools. Hence staff turnover in these schools was high (Table XXX).

The more successful private schools recognize a close connection between the performance of their teachers, the success of learners in examinations, and the attraction and retention of new enrolments. Much as the case study schools were aware of this fact, they seemed not to be able to create an atmosphere that would motivate the teachers. Teachers in many of the case study schools lamented their being excluded from attending career development opportunities offered to their colleagues in government schools. Their apparent marginalisation was a source of repeated concern. Nevertheless, it was learnt that the government had started inviting teachers

from private secondary schools to attend some in-service trainings especially to do with curriculum orientations. However the proprietors of the private schools were required to pay a fee for their teachers to attend these sessions.

Many teachers also remarked on the difficulties of teaching pupils with a low motivation towards study and low academic achievement. As earlier mentioned, significant numbers of learners were in private schools because they had failed to gain entry to government schools, or because they had failed to complete examinations successfully. The academic standing of such learners is relatively low when compared to learners selected to government secondary schools. Hence teachers complained of a hard task to teach them to a level where they can effectively compete with their fellows in government secondary schools. One teacher lamented that:

> It is difficult to teach learners in private secondary schools. Their academic backgrounds are in most cases poor. It requires a lot of effort, hard work, commitment and good will from the teacher to mould them to a desirable level to pass national examinations (FT, Jungle secondary school).

Some teachers also complained of overload and under-staffing, which resulted from the commercial orientation of their schools. It was revealed that some teachers were teaching two or more subjects across all the forms at the schools. They attributed this to inadequate staff that could not be evenly distributed across all the four forms. One teacher testified that:

> My teaching load is just too much. I hardly find time to rest as I have three subjects to teach in the different forms. If I do not prepare thoroughly for my lessons during the night, then I have a tough time teaching as I cannot prepare during the day. When that happens, I end up not doing a good job in the class. Consequently the learners complain to the director that I am not teaching properly. The situation is pathetic, but what can I do? Jobs are scarce! (MT, Trading secondary school)

Teachers further complained of job insecurity in private secondary schools. They felt that proprietors could easily fire them whimsically at short notice and in some cases not even with notice. Their jobs are also subject to fluctuations in learner enrolments, and in wider economic changes over which they have no control. This was also confirmed by one of the directors of the schools that were visited who attributed understaffing to low learner enrolment at the school. He affirmed that:

> With just 27 learners at the school, I cannot employ many teachers as I will not be able to pay their salaries. In fact even now, I am using my personal money to top up the salaries for the available few teachers (Director, Tarmac secondary school).

Some of the teachers who we interviewed believed that learners in private schools were difficult to control and needed strict discipline coupled with a hard working spirit among the teachers. In all the case study schools, teachers mentioned that learners in private schools give more discipline problems than learners in government secondary schools. Teachers felt the owners of

the schools value the learners so much that they do not want to lose them as doing so, would take them out of business. The learners capitalize on this situation and behave any how they want. One director indicated that:

> We are a bit lenient in giving punishments to offenders because we are also aware that if given very tough punishments, the learners can decide to migrate to other nearby schools. So, yes we discipline them but we take caution so as not to lose the learners. We often call their parents and discuss the issues amicably (Director, Grave Secondary School).

Despite the challenging situation for teachers and learners in many of these schools, it appears parents still consider them the best option that they can afford through which their children can access secondary education. Without these for profit private secondary schools, many of these learners would not get access to secondary school education. Parents have a choice between private secondary school or no secondary school for their children. One of the directors of the schools alluded to this when he said:

> Parents or guardians of learners of our schools struggle to pay for the little tuition fees we charge in our school. This is an indication that they cannot afford the fees charged in medium or high cost secondary schools. In fact when government wanted to close our school in 2009 during the crackdown, parents cried foul and lobbied the District Education Manager not to close the school. I was advised to quickly attend to the concerns so that the learners could continue accessing their secondary education from this school (Director, Dwelling Secondary School).

The learners interviewed, who may not be representative of all the learners, tended to like the working spirit of many of the teachers as well as the monitoring of the teachers by the proprietors of the schools. This they said forces the teachers to work and commit themselves to duty. They recognised that teachers perceived the learners' shortfalls and went out of their way to help them as already highlighted in earlier paragraphs. Nevertheless the general feeling among many learners was that in an attempt to cut costs, the schools' owners often compromised on staffing levels.

Infrastructure and school facilities

Adequate and decent facilities create a positive environment, affect the working conditions of staff and influence the learning environment (Chisholm and Motala, 1998). Availability of infrastructure such as classrooms, teachers' houses, staff rooms, head teacher's office, store rooms, libraries, laboratories and toilets renders the teaching and learning environment conducive to the teaching and learning process. Similarly availability of other school facilities such as textbooks, electricity and water is also critical to the teaching and learning process.

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Classrooms should offer an enabling environment for the teaching and learning process to effectively take place. In this study, almost all of the l5 case study schools were in purpose built classrooms although one had some of its classrooms in a dwelling house. However, many of these were constructed to low standards using cheap materials and often they showed little evidence of investment or maintenance (see Table XXX, XXX and XXX for the ratings on the quality of the buildings). Ventilation as well as lighting were poor in some of the classrooms and had little or nothing in the way of decoration or learning materials on the walls. Some of the classrooms were grossly overcrowded, while others had an abundance of unused, empty space. In many of the schools there was no teachers' workspace available. Typically these schools stood on small plots of land that did not allow for expansion. Usually there were one or two buildings, with a quite typical single block of four classrooms.

None of the case study schools had accommodation for teachers. Teachers lived in their own privately rented or owned properties, sometimes at considerable distance from the school. They commuted to school by foot, bicycle or on public transport. Interviews with teachers revealed that accommodation for teachers was one of the main concerns and indeed a de-motivating factor for teaching in a private secondary school. One teacher alluded to the complexity of the problem and highlighted that:

> I come from far; I take almost two hours to get to the school if I am walking or 45 minutes if I am riding a bicycle. It is not easy to get a decent house close to the school, let alone afford the rental fee if it is available. I arrive at the school very tired and exhausted to effectively discharge my duties as a teacher. Sometimes I arrive late for classes due to bicycle breakdowns. This problem is compounded by the fact that we do not receive any housing allowance (MT, Airport secondary school).

Building houses for teachers appears not to be on the priority list of proprietors for private secondary schools nor is giving housing allowances to teachers to subsidize their rental expenses. Gray (2005) contends that travel difficulties result in the waste of valuable time and a reduction in contact time between the teacher and the learners. Hence modalities for resolving problems of accommodation for teachers in private schools need to be explored.

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Staffrooms and head teacher's offices were available in 80% of the case study schools; storerooms were seen in only 40% of the schools; libraries were in 66% while laboratories were in only 40% of the schools. In schools where there was no head teacher's office or staffroom, the available room served as both a staffroom and an administration room for the head teacher. This to some extent was seen to inconvenience mostly the head teacher who at times required privacy to discharge his/her administrative duties effectively. In fact one head teacher expressed his concern when he said that

> There is no staffroom at this school as a result I share my office with the teachers. I see this as an inconvenience because, as an administrator, there are some issues that I would want to handle privately with individual teachers or learners. This arrangement does not allow for that (HT, Grave secondary school)

Toilets were available in almost all the sampled schools although at one of the schools, there were no toilets for girls, so girls had to use toilets belonging to a nearby orphanage. This was as a result of heavy rains that destroyed the toilets. New toilets were under construction at the time of the study. In most of the schools, there were insufficient toilets for the number of pupils. In other cases, teachers had no toilets and were using the same toilets with the learners. Apart from just one school, in all the schools visited, the toilets were very basic latrines in temporary structures with no plumbing. They had no hand washing facilities and were not hygienic.

Toilets are important assets in schools as they ensure good sanitation and hygiene for the good health of both the teachers and the learners in schools; therefore they need to be given attention. Similarly, schools without any reliable water source, inconvenienced learners as well as teachers as they had to travel some distance to access water for drinking from a nearby community borehole. Twenty per cent of the schools in this study did not have water sources.

Textbooks for learners were reportedly not available in the schools. It appears it is common practice in for profit private schools not to provide learners with textbooks. Learners buy their own textbooks for use in class. Those that cannot afford books, come to class without textbooks. In this study, learners in Form 1 and Form 4 classes were asked whether they had their own textbook for maths and English. Only 11.8% of the learners in the sample had their own textbook for maths and only 14.7% had their own textbook for English. The majority of learners either did not have access to a textbook for key subjects or had to share a textbook among a group. Textbooks facilitate the teaching and learning process. The paucity of books in schools means that learners have no means of reference during the teaching and learning process and this can limit learner participation in class.

The government does not provide textbooks for learners in private schools. It was learnt from ministry of education officials that private schools are in business and so have to source their own textbooks. Unlike in the past when prescribed textbooks were not sold in bookshops, currently the government has made a deliberate effort to sell books in designated bookshops for private schools to access and buy them for their learners. Unfortunately private school owners seem to have placed this responsibility to the guardians of the learners. One head teacher mentioned that:

> The school does not provide textbooks to learners. They buy their own. The school cannot afford such an extra expense. If we struggle with the teacher's salaries, how then can I afford buying textbooks for learners? (Director, Tarmac Secondary School)

As for desks, there may be benches and chairs in many classrooms, but it was common to find learners sharing benches or chairs, having to stand or sit on the floor, and many of the learners did not have desks or had to share desks with others. Data from the survey of learners showed that 37.5% of the learners had their own desk to work on, while 32.3% of the learners shared a desk with others, beyond the intended capacity of the desk. That means in effect that they had to work in cramped conditions in their classes. 30.3% of the learners had no desk to work on; they either worked on their laps, on benches or on the floor of the classrooms. Observations of

the classes in case study schools confirmed this. This raises concerns about the teaching and learning conditions in for profit private schools.

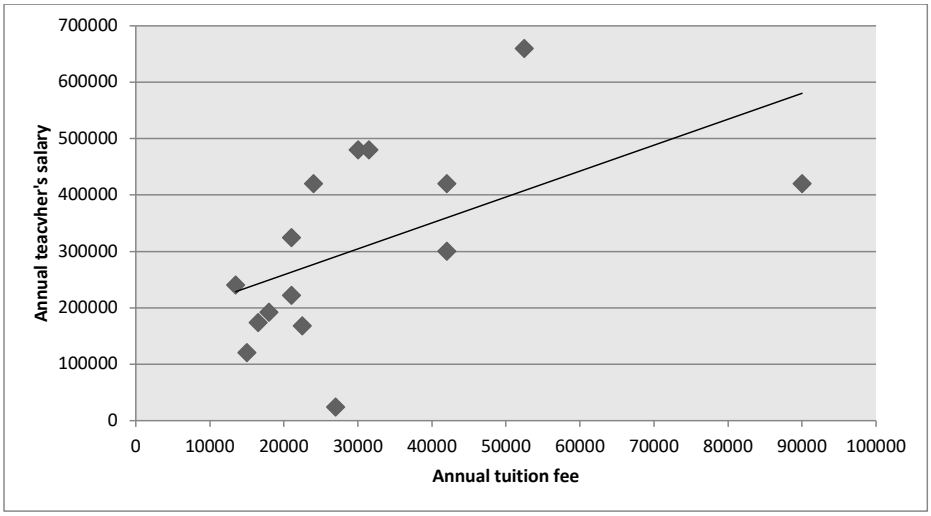
In terms of availability of electricity, the study noted that electricity was found in only 33% of the sampled schools. The rest did not have electricity. This inconvenienced not only learners who wanted to study during the night if they live close to the school or they are boarders, but also teaching of some practical subjects such as physical science and biology.

From the evidence gathered on infrastructure, the case study schools have a long way to go in ensuring that the infrastructure in the schools is safe, pleasant and of good quality. In some cases schools did have reasonably good facilities that were cared for and maintained, but in others there was evidence of a lack of investment, care and attention to the facilities and environment of the school. In many schools toilets were primitive and unhygienic and classrooms were dark and uninspiring. This suggests that the schools' managements do not value the safety, security, and well-being of learners or the teaching and learning environment very highly.

Finances

School fees in the case study schools varied from MK 4,500 to MK 30,000 per learner per term. Fees appeared to be determined by proprietors acting alone and making market judgements of how much they could charge in addition to assessing the affordability levels of the targeted population. Figure XXX below illustrates the relationship between annual fees and annual teacher salaries in the case study schools. This shows that teacher salaries and fees are positively correlated, but there is some variation in the ratio between them, indicating that some schools are more profitable than others. There is a wide range in teacher salaries even in schools in the lowest fee bands. One school, Crack (the point to the right of the chart below) charges fees much higher than other schools, but the average teacher's salary is similar to other schools with lower fees.

Figure 23 Annual tuition fees and salaries in case study schools



In the case study schools there was no publicly available information on finances. In all cases it appeared that salaries took up a large proportion of expenditure, but it was hard to estimate how much. Non-teacher costs included the costs of salaries of support staff, the costs of utilities, furniture, and building maintenance. In many schools visited, the impression from observations on the quality and condition of school infrastructure and facilities was that these costs were kept to a bare minimum. Learners bought their own uniforms, books, stationary and food. They also paid exam and registration fees. Many of these schools appeared to spend almost nothing on learning materials.

Wholly private schools rely directly on fee income to survive and are sensitive to declines in learner numbers. They benefit greatly from economies of scale to the extent of providing incentives to learners who bring in learners from other schools to enrol at the school as this contributes to increases in class sizes. In some of the case study schools additional fees, on top of the tuition fees and boarding fees included an admission fee for registration at the school, which was about MK 1,000, payable once on entry. Exam registration fees of about MK 4,000 for JCE and MSCE are charged to parents, the school's uniforms may cost between MK 7,000 and 10,000 per learner per year or whenever needed.

It was impossible from the data to establish how profitable private secondary schools may be. It was clear from what head teachers and ISAMA said, that the objectives of school owners were to run the school at a profit, as a business. It was noted in this study however that the schools may not realize as much profit during the early years. In fact in some of the case study schools the proprietors lamented that they were operating at a loss and had to use their personal money

from other businesses to pay the teachers. Nevertheless they do not give up because they know that they will start making good profits once the schools get established.

Conclusions

From the synthesis of the case studies, it is apparent that the conditions through which for profit private secondary schools are offering secondary education are not delivering quality education. They may be providing access to secondary education but the quality of education is compromised in the process. They are running without governing boards to provide checks and balances to management; the infrastructure is mostly in deplorable condition; most of the schools have no bank accounts or records for financial transactions; teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and writing materials are not provided to learners; desks and other teaching and learning resources are not in adequate quantities; many schools rely heavily on unqualified teachers; teachers have no job security, housing allowance, leave grants, pension and other non-salary benefits. Schools have high staff turnover due to the poor working conditions.

Nevertheless from the case studies in this study, for profit private secondary schools appear to provide access for secondary education to a population that would not have otherwise had any secondary education. Better governance and regulation of schools and more transparency in terms of fees and expenditure would improve trust in schools and allow better proposals for improving quality. Investment in proper management structures, teachers and infrastructure is needed in schools.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

We structure our conclusions around the claims that proponents of private schooling in developing countries make for the benefits of the private provision of public services in developing countries:

• Competition in the market for education leading to improved performance on achievement tests
• Autonomy in school management leading to more efficient use of resources
• Improved standards through performance related contracts for teachers
• Risk-sharing between government and providers (Patrinos et al. 2009).

In Malawi the 'market' for secondary education is small, very limited by a lack of supply and limits to demand due to costs of secondary education that are beyond all but the wealthiest 20% of the population. Competition is therefore severely constrained and appears not to have an effect on performance. There are few places in Malawi where there is real competition between schools. One of the roles of ISAMA is to regulate competition between its members, by avoiding schools being too close together and fixing price bands linked to government school types. Private secondary schools do compete with government schools in some places, at the lower end of the market they compete with ODSS and CDSS. ISAMA has campaigned to close down low quality government schools. Some private secondary schools located close to government schools and compete directly with them for students. This can result in inefficiencies and destructive role than constructive relationships between schools. A policy is needed to guide and manage the location of private schools, ensure that they are likely to be viable without undermining the adjacent government schools, and encourage increased provision in underserved areas. Due to the very limited supply of government secondary education, many private schools absorb excess demand from those families wealthy enough to pay and with children who did not perform well enough in exams to gain entry to competitive, high quality government schools. Private secondary schools introduce competition in very few locations, in ways that are determined by their association and the limits to supply and demand. This is a long way from being a free and competitive market, or one that is regulated to ensure improving access, quality and equity in secondary education.

The evidence from this study is that private secondary schools predominantly respond to two different kinds of demand from households. The number of places available at secondary school in Malawi has been restricted for many years and many more which to attend than have the opportunity to go to come in schools. For some this excess demand can be met by paying privately by parents are in the top quintile of income distribution. The second group of parents express a kind of differentiated demand in the belief that quality and character of private secondary schools is superior to that of government schools.

Private schools in Malawi have a lot of autonomy in their management. Apart from a one off inspection of schools and the closure of a few schools with very poor facilities and teaching staff,

there is virtually no regulation of the sector. Schools appear to be allowed to operate with no governing bodies, proper accounts or records. Autonomy is part of the problem in the Malawian context, rather than part of the solution. More, firmer regulation is needed to ensure that schools provide good quality education in safe and healthy environments for children.

To ensure greater transparency and accountability private secondary schools which are licensed and regulated should publish annual accounts which are independently audited, provide standardised information on examination performance at JCE and MSCE, maintain public list of staff members and attendance, and share details of school development plans. Protocols should be developed for the collection of school fees and the obligations of both parents and schools in relation to the fee-paying participation. This should address questions of the mechanism for raising fees periodically, clear indications of what fees cover and do not cover, procedures related to non-payment and the protection of children's continuous education experience, curriculum specifications, and facilities. Government ministries and district education offices must publish lists of registered schools, so that parents can make informed choices about schools. Clear categories for licensing and registration are needed which distinguish between for profit and not-for-profit organisations, make clear the legal status of the school as an organisation and employer and identify what obligations exist to pay different taxes including corporate taxes and VAT.

Many for profit private schools appear to operate very 'efficiently'. Their owners extract the maximum that they can in fees and other costs, and invest the minimum possible in maintaining infrastructure, providing teaching and learning materials. The infrastructure available in a proportion of the private secondary schools in our case study sample is inadequate and insufficient to lead to the sustained achievement of national learning goals. This means in practice that many learners in for profit private schools do not have chairs to sit on, desks to write on, textbooks, clean toilets, places to wash their hands, water to drink or safe, dry, well lit classrooms. The owners of for profit private schools regard them as businesses and run them accordingly, to maximise profit. In many cases they appear to make very healthy profits. This level of efficiency is not desirable. A more 'inefficient' system where schools have higher costs but provide a better education for children in a safe environment seems to us to be preferable. Licensing and regulation should incorporate plans to ensure that registered schools meet minimum standards and improve over time towards national norms of provision.

The contracts held by teachers in Malawian private schools, or the almost total lack of them, encourage short termism by teachers and school management. There is evidence of high turnover in the private school sector which is likely to result in discontinuities in children's educational participation. We also find that there is considerable volatility of enrolments in case study schools from year to year. Low levels of achievement are likely to be associated with discontinuities in schooling. It is important to develop strategies to reduce the number of schools children attend, especially if they are in the private sector.

Teachers in private schools are employed in many different ways, are often not qualified as teachers, and may be paid below the daily poverty line. Protocols should exist for the employment of teachers in licensed and registered private schools which conform to national

legislation on employment practices. The teachers should be paid wages above the poverty line, and should never collect fees directly from students. Eventually most private school teachers hope to secure employment in the government sector where wages are higher, conditions of employment better and there are opportunities for career development. The incentive structure linked to exam results, may improve results, but these do not mean real learning has happened. These structures create incentives for teaching to the test, exam cramming, superficial learning, rote memorisation and corruption.

Performance in private schools overall (all types of private schools) is better than the least competitive form of government secondary provision, but this masks extreme diversity within the private sector and the effect of socio-economic status on performance, which is a more likely explanation for the difference than school type. Performance in private schools is not better on average than more competitive government schools with professional, qualified teachers on long term contracts. There is no evidence to suggest from this that the more autonomous private sector with greater power to hire and fire teachers outperforms the government sector in performance.

Private school owners in Malawi do take risks; they invest their own money in land and infrastructure, hire teachers and set up as a business. So risky is much of their business that banks are not willing to finance it without high interest rates and collateral. Private school owners are unwilling to open schools in chains to maximise their profits and efficiencies due to the risks and lack of trust in manager and sub-contractors. The antagonistic relationship between private school owners and the government means that there is unlikely to be risk sharing between private school owners and the government in the short term. Risk sharing must come with regulation and transparency, which are both in short supply at the moment.

Areas for further research

- Better data is needed on the locations, numbers and nature of for profit private schools in Malawi. There is now more data than there was in 2003, but there is still inadequate data on how many private schools open and close, where they are, who owns and runs them, what their fees are and some way of disaggregating them into bands or types of schools.
- Extension of the study to include for profit private schools at primary level covering similar issues to those at secondary level and identifying any specific issues at primary level.
- More detailed analysis of supply and demand and patterns of attendance using school mapping techniques to locate provision and rates of take-up in relation to population density, proximity to roads, location in towns and cities.
- Identification of areas in schools where there is a high turnover of children in private schools coupled with illustrative case studies to establish the extent of transfer between schools and the likely length of a school career within each school for different groups of students.

- A sub study of teachers working in private schools to acquire more information about who they are, how they are employed, how frequently they change jobs and move from school to school, and whether or not the characteristics of teachers prepared to work in the schools limits their location and the extent to which they can reach into poor rural areas.
- Close enquiry into the financing of private schools in relation to fee structures, income from fees and other sources, default rates on fee payments, and information on costs including salaries of teachers and other staff, learning materials, building maintenance, and any building costs, mortgages, and loans that may exist and need to be serviced.
- Household level surveys of how families afford the costs and what proportion of household income fees represent in these private for profit secondary schools. This should allow judgements to be made as to whether those attending of only from the top quintile of household income or from other quintiles.
- We were unable to identify innovatory pedagogic practice in the schools we visited. Our observations suggest that their potential to develop beyond chalk and talk and a 'banking' view of knowledge may be very limited. A study of pedagogy and curriculum in a sample of private schools in the mid to low fee range could be very illuminating if it established what potential there was to improve practice. It should also compare what happens in the private schools with what happens in a comparable sample of public schools to establish if many of the assertions made about private schools have a basis in fact.
- Using primary school leavers examination data and matching that with the same candidates at JCE and MSCE level would enable a 'value added' study of school types to show how different school types support the learning of children rather than relying on one-off national exam result averages.
- If there is the opportunity to do a randomised control trial looking at the characteristics and performance of samples of public and private schools this should be considered.

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APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDIES

DWELLING REVOLUTION PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Dwelling Revolution Private Secondary School was a day secondary school located within Blantyre urban in a township known as Bangwe. The school was run as a family owned business and the director of the school also worked as a head teacher at government secondary school while the wife oversaw the day to day activities of the school especially the finances for the school. The school site was initially meant to be a dwelling place of the proprietor however due to some technical hiccups he experienced at a site where he was privately renting for the school, he and his wife thought of developing and turning their dwelling place into a secondary school. It had forms 1 to 4 and was single streamed though plans were there to make it double stream due to its high enrolments. The school was established in 1999 with the purpose of increasing access to secondary education for the poor and vulnerable children. It became registered with Government in the year 2000 and later on registered with the Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA). It is not an examination centre and so learners from the school sat for their national examinations at nearby schools.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school had four classrooms out of which two were purpose built while the other two were converted from a dwelling house of the proprietor. The walls of the classroom blocks were built with burnt bricks and mud while the floors were cemented and the roofing was done with corrugated iron sheets. However there was no internal ceiling to the roofs. Ventilators were available on the classroom walls to assist in circulation of air in the classrooms. The classrooms appeared congested with learners to such an extent that the desks available were not adequate for the official seating capacity (see picture below)

A small poorly constructed fence surrounded the school premises however this was not enough to keep out some intruders. For instance, it was learnt that a certain hemp smoker often times disturbed the learners when they were learning and threatened to stub the learners, the director and teachers with a knife.

Although the school had a small head teacher's office as well as staffroom, it did not have electricity, computer, library and play ground. Further there was no water source at the school as result learners used a community borehole at nearby weaving factory. They sometimes drew water from a nearby village well which was not in very good condition. The unavailability of a library as well as laboratories rendered the teaching and learning environment at the school un-conducive especially for practical subjects. Although the school timetable had a slot for extracurricular activities on Fridays, the learners complained that the absence of a playground, adversely affected the progress of the sporting activities.

Though not in very good condition, there were 6 pit latrines (3 for girls and 3 for boys) at the school. The situation rendered the schooling environment unhygienic as usually one would want to wash hands after visiting such kind of toilets but the unavailability of a water source at the school, made this impossible. Nevertheless, in some cases, water in pails was put at strategic places at the school for learners to wash their hands.

LEARNERS

According to the director of the school, the school mainly targeted learners who were from poor or middle level income groups and so found it difficult to afford more expensive and good quality private secondary schools. Admission of the learners did not consider age or gender as such there

were some married students at the school. During registration, each learner was required to fill and sign an admission form which contained rules and regulations to be followed while at the school. The majority of the learners in Form 1 came straight from primary schools upon not being selected to government secondary schools. In the other forms, the learners may either come from government Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS's) or from other private secondary schools. The head teacher as well as the teachers complained of the calibre of learners they got at the school moaning that normally for profit secondary schools such as theirs got low performing students and referred to them as 'rejects from the government system'. Teachers concurred with the head teacher and said

> It takes a lot of effort by the teacher to mode our learners into the kind of learners that can do better and compete with their fellow students in government secondary schools.

The major catchment areas for the school included Namiyango, Bangwe, and Mvula locations. However, it was learnt that some learners came from Dwelling village which was the home village for the director. Such learners paid a subsidized tuition fee as most of them were the director's relations and were also from very poor backgrounds according to the director of the school. The school also had two learners with disabilities.

Enrolment

The enrolment of the school at the time of the study was at 349 learners with 166 boys and 183 girls. From the enrolment data captured since 2008, it appeared the trend of enrolment kept on fluctuating thereby making it difficult to conclude whether the pattern was increasing or decreasing over the years (refer to the table below).

Form	2008			2009			2010 - 2011			2011 - 2012			2012 – 2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	41	44	85	43	47	90	23	28	51	32	40	72	44	45	89
2	7	45	52	43	40	83	30	38	68	17	28	45	42	55	97
3	33	22	55	45	45	90	42	45	87	36	37	73	49	45	94
4	28	19	47	19	23	42	19	22	41	20	18	38	31	38	69
Total	**109**	**130**	**239**	**150**	**155**	**305**	**114**	**133**	**247**	**105**	**123**	**228**	**166**	**183**	**349**

Girls' enrolment seemed to be consistently higher than that of boys across all the five years.

Record keeping for the school appeared to be problematic as a result there was no data on dropout and migration of learners. Nevertheless, the learners and the teachers pointed out that migration of learners to and from the school was high. Migration to the school was high because of the school fees which were affordable to most of the poor families around the school; at the

same time migration out of the school was also high because of the un-conducive teaching and learning environment at the school. One of the focus group discussions revealed that:

> Some learners come to this school just to wait for getting a place at another school. There is no security here and teaching is poor.

Performance

Due to the poor record keeping, performance in Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE) for the 2011/2012 academic year and Malawi School Certificate Examinations (MSCE) for the 2010/2011 academic was not captured. Table below displays the performance data.

	2010/2011			2011/2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	27	32	59	-	-	-
Number of learners who passed JCE	26	28	54	-	-	-
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	-	-	-	11	20	31
Number of learners who passed MSCE	-	-	-	2	13	15
Number of learners selected to University	0	0	0	0	0	0

According to the statistics given, 91.5% of the learners passed their Junior Certificate Examinations in the 2010/2011 academic year while 48% passed the Malawi School Certificate of Examinations in 2011/2012 academic year**.** Obviously the MSCE performance leaves a lot to be desired. The teachers as well as the learners attributed the low performance at the school to the kind of environment in which the teaching and learning process is taking place. Mention was the inadequate and poor quality infrastructure as well as capacity of the teachers and the quality of learners that got enrolled at the school.

TEACHERS

There were six teachers at the school and all of them were male. No teacher at the school had either a degree or a diploma. All of them possessed a Malawi School Certificate of Examinations. Three teachers were qualified (had teaching certificates though for primary education) while the other three were not qualified. One teacher was between the 20-25 years age category; the other one was between the 26-30 years age category; while the rest were in the 36-40 years age category.

The starting salary of teachers at the school ranged between MK 13,000.00 and MK16, 000.00 (about US$ 32-40) and this was calculated against the school fees for 3 learners per term. It was learnt that according to ISAMA regulations, the minimum salary of teachers should be calculated based on the total school fees of two learners. The salaries were paid monthly through direct cash sourced from the learners school fees. No other non-salary benefits were available at the school.

Due to the low salaries, the director of the school alluded to high turnover of teachers and lamented that it was difficult to retain teachers at the school as the salaries they receive were too low to satisfy their basic needs. The teachers concurred with the director that the salaries were too low to sustain them let alone motivate them to effectively teach at the school. Again the low salaries did not attract teachers with good academic qualifications and this explained why there was no teacher with a degree or a diploma at the school. The available six teachers were not adequate when weighed against the enrolment at the school as well as the number of subjects offered at the school. Learners in one of the focus group discussions commented that:

> We do not have enough teachers at this school and those that are available are not well qualified. This has resulted in a lot of learners not taking some subjects they would have otherwise taken if there were adequate and well trained teachers.

This academic year alone, four teachers left the school and also four teachers were recruited at the school. This gave problems in continuity of work covered in class.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school solely depended on money paid as school fees by learners. The fees were K5,500.00 (about US $14) per learner per term and they were paid termly through direct cash. However some very needy learners from the home village of the director who were his relations paid a subsidized fee of MK3 500 (about US$ 9). The school did have a bank account but the account was not audited though it was reported that rough records of transactions were available and kept by the family. All other expenses were covered by the school through the fees paid by the learners. However learners bought their own writing materials as well as textbooks. They also paid for their uniform as well as educational or sporting trips whenever available.

Most of the learners did not afford to pay the fees at one goal. Such learners were allowed to pay in instalments. During the time of the study (close to the end of the term), 9 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees and about 12 learners had stopped schooling because of non-payment of fees. It was also learnt that some learners were sponsored at the school by some Non-Governmental Organizations such as Zion Ministries and Girls' Home.

JUNGLE PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Jungle Private Secondary School was located in Bangwe Township within Blantyre city. It was a day private secondary school. The school site belonged to the director of the school who also happened to run a Private Primary School and a Nursery School at the same place. Further, the director also owned another secondary school in Thyolo district.

Jungle Private Secondary School was established in 2006 and registered with Private Schools Association of Malawi (PRISAM). It was learned from the director of the school that the school was not yet registered with ISAMA as according to him, there were still some issues to be ironed out between PRISAM and ISAMA before he can think of registering with ISAMA. However the school was an examination centre and learners from nearby schools such as Dwelling Private Secondary School sat for their MANEB examinations at this school.

The school was established with the purpose of making secondary education accessible to all including orphans and street children. To that extent, the owner accords scholarships to about 7 orphaned learners, 6 street children and about one very needy but outstanding learner in performance.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Jungle Private Secondary School had 4 permanent classrooms, a head teacher's office, a staffroom, a library that also hosted a computer lab. It also had a reliable water source in form of a standpipe although on the day of the visit it was noted that the water at the school was disconnected. This resulted in learners using a tap from the director's home. Further, the school had 6 girls' toilets and 8 boys' toilets. There was also a playground at the school and the school timetable had a slot for extracurricular activities. However the school had no electricity, laboratories and a storeroom.

The classrooms for the secondary school were within one single block. The block was built of concrete, the floor was cemented and the roof had iron sheets. The windows were not secure as they had no windowpanes and most of them had no burglar bars (see picture below).

The open windows led to problems during rainy and winter seasons as water passed through the windows. This forced the learners to squeeze themselves to the centre of the class. During the day of the visit, it was raining and figure below illustrates how the learners packed themselves in the central part of the class.

Nevertheless, without the inconvenience from the rains, the classrooms were very spacious with enough room for teacher movements as well as use of teaching/learning strategies that demand adequate classroom space. Unfortunately all the classrooms at the school did not have talking walls i.e. a display of instruction materials on the walls of the classrooms. Figure below shows the wall of one of the classrooms.

Though the school had toilets in form of pit latrines, the toilets were not clean and were not cemented. In addition the toilets produced bad smell since there were no slabs to cover the openings of the latrines. Figure below shows a block of toilets for the boys

Each and every leaner at the school had a seat and a writing surface an indication that the school is well resourced in terms of desks for the enrolment of the learners.

LEARNERS

According to the director of the school, the majority of learners at the school were from low-income families. They struggled to pay the fees for the school, which was pegged at K7, 000.00 (about US$ 17.5). Most of the learners paid in instalments. Some paid in even more than two instalments. Just like in many Private Secondary Schools, admission of learners was inconsiderate of age or gender. Anybody interested in learning at the school was registered so long they signed the agreement forms outlining the rules and regulations of the school. Major catchment areas for the school were CDSS's and other private secondary schools in addition to registering learners straight from primary schools i.e. those that were not selected for government schools. The majority of the learners came from urban areas, their parents were working and others were doing small-scale businesses in the city.

Enrolment

The enrolment of the school at the time of the data collection stood at 316 learners with 160 boys and 136 girls. Unfortunately there was no data on enrolment for the previous years hence making it difficult to tell whether the enrolment was increasing or decreasing. However verbal reports from the director and the learners pointed towards a trend of increasing enrolment over the years. Table below displays the enrolment figures for the 2012/2013 academic year at the school.

Learner enrolment IN 2012/2013

Form	2012 – 2013 academic year		
	Boys	Girls	Total
1	49	45	89
2	42	55	97
3	49	45	94
4	31	38	69
Total	**160**	**136**	**316**

Learners attributed the increase in enrolment to hard working teachers at the school; affordability of the school fees which are also paid in instalments; and a history of good performance of the learners when compared to other nearby private secondary schools.

Again there was no statistical data on learner drop out and learner migration. However on migration it was reported by the director that the migration of learners from other schools to Jungle Private Secondary School is high. Most learners are attracted to the school because of the reasons highlighted above in addition to conducive teaching and learning atmosphere at the school. In one of the focus group discussions with the learners, it was commented that:

> This is a good school and most learners come here because of good performance of learners, we learn at list 9 subjects a day, we have enough desks, classrooms are big and

spacious, the teachers are hardworking, the school fees is affordable (K7000), we receive things like school bags, cartons of soap and in some cases exercise books from the school.

Concurring with the learners, the director mentioned that he has some friends from Europe who sometimes send him donations to help run the school.

Performance

Table below displays performance data for the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years.

	2010/2011			2011/2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	19	34	53	24	33	57
Number of learners who passed JCE	15	27	42	19	30	49
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	29	32	61	26	42	68
Number of learners who passed MSCE	19	21	40	17	22	39
Number of learners selected to University	0	2	2	0	0	0

Calculations from raw data in the table above, shows that there was an increase in pass rate for JCE examinations from 79% in 2010/2011 academic year to 86% in 2011/2012 academic year where as the pass rate dropped for MSCE examinations from 66% in 2010/2011 academic year to 57% in 2011/2012 academic year. Girls' performance was slightly lower than that of boys in both JCE and MSCE examinations where it was noted that pass rate for JCE for girls in 2011/2012 academic year was 79% whereas for boys was 91%. Similarly pass rate for MSCE for girls in the same year was 52% whereas for boys was 57%.

Learners attributed the low performance of girls to love affairs that took place at the school. It was reported in one off the focus group discussions that:

> *The reason why the performance for girls is low at this school is because, most of the girls have secret affairs at the campus so instead of reading their books they go to the nearest man made Forrest called love jungle and do romance there.*

Figure below shows the love jungle close to the school campus where learners went for romance.

Love jungle

TEACHERS

There were 9 teachers at the school out of which 8 were male and only one was a female teacher and all of them were full time teachers. Two of the male teachers had degrees while the six male teachers were just MSCE holders. The female teacher had a diploma in Human Resource Management. Four of the nine teachers were qualified[5] teachers while five were not qualified teachers. The majority (5) of the teachers were in the 20 – 25 age group; two were in the 26 – 30 age group while only one was between 36 – 40 years of age.

In terms of salaries, the starting salary for those with degrees was MK35, 000.00 (about US$ 87.5) per month; those with Diplomas started at MK25, 000.00; while those with just MSCE was MK20, 000.00. The teachers were paid monthly through direct cash from the learners' school fees. However it was learnt from the director of the school that school fees alone could not suffice the teacher salaries as such the additional money was sourced from the director's personal friends from outside the country. It was also revealed by the director that the management of the school gave out some non-salary benefits to the teachers. Mention was made of incentives in form of loan schemes, salary advances and parcels containing assorted items. However the teachers said there were no any other incentives at the school apart from the salary they receive at the end of the month.

Nevertheless staff turnover at the school seem to be kept under control as only three teachers left the school in the current academic year and also three teachers were recruited to replace those that left. Those that left did so because one was dismissed due to misconduct at the school, the other one went for further studies while the other left for greener pasture.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

[5] The term "qualified" in this study refers to a teacher with a teaching qualification and not necessarily the level with which the teacher is qualified to teach ie whether primary or secondary.

The school was to a larger extent financed by school fees from learners, which were MK7, 000.00 (about US$ 17.5) per term per learner. Additional finances and material resources were sourced from well wishers and personal friends of the director living outside the country. The fees were paid termly mainly through cash in hand. Those that could not afford to pay at one goal were allowed to pay in instalments. In some cases some learners failed to finish paying for their fees even when allowed to pay in instalments. When that happened, such learners were asked to call their parents to the school for hearing and logistics on how and when they would finish paying for their wards. If the parents/guardians were not cooperative with the school administration as regards payment of fees for their wards, the wards were sent out of the school up until such a time they would finish paying their fees. At the time of the study, 12 learners had not finished paying for their fees and nobody had stopped schooling because of non-payment of school fees.

The school had a bank account but it was revealed that the accounts were not externally audited.

AIRPORT PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Airport Private Secondary School was a day Private Secondary School located in Lunzu outside Blantyre city about 7 kilometres from Lunzu Trading Centre. The school was run as a family business. The wife of the director of the school was a bursar for the school and so oversaw the collection of finances for the school. The director was also an Agro dealer in buying and selling of crops. The school was operating on rented premises from Maoni Orphanage and it was learnt that the rental charge per month was MK20, 000.00 (about US$ 50).

The school was established in 2004 and registered with the government of Malawi in 2005 but had no affiliation to neither the Private Schools Association of Malawi, nor the Independent Schools Association of Malawi. However plans were there to have it registered with the Independent Schools Association of Malawi. It was a full one streamed Private Secondary School however it was not an examination centre as such learners sat for their national examinations at Lunzu Government Secondary School some 7kms away from the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Airport Private secondary school had four classrooms in one continuous classroom block. The classrooms were very spacious however they needed some maintenance because some of them were not cemented while others had their cement peeling off from the floor (see figure below)

Although the roof was corrugated with iron sheets the windows did not have glasses and they were on one side only making ventilation difficult. Further the lighting inside the classrooms was poor because the classroom block had very small windows at the backside that were also highly elevated (see figure below)

Further security to the teaching and learning resources stored in the classrooms was not guaranteed because the classroom doors were not lockable. Nevertheless the school had an administration block containing a headteacher's office and staffroom only that the staffroom was under innovation at the time of the study. The school also had a very good playground that also serviced a government primary school near by as well as the orphanage. However the school did not have a fence, library, a store room and laboratory among other notable basic school infrastructure.

There were few toilets for boys and no toilets for girls at the school. It was reported by the head teacher of the school that heavy rains damaged all the girls' toilets and some boys' toilets. This resulted in the girls using toilets meant for the orphanage pending renovation of theirs. The boys' toilets including the urinals were not in very good shape and it appeared they were not permanently constructed (see figure below)

Toilet

Urinals

Due to the bad condition of the few available boys' toilets, it was learnt that some learners used the nearby bushy fields to relieve themselves when pressed. Additionally there was a reliable water source at the school in form of a borehole on campus. The borehole also served the primary school that was nearby as well as the orphanage and the general public around the school (see picture below)

Borehole on school campus

In terms of availability of desks at the school, it was noted and reported that the school did not have adequate desks for the enrolment of the learners. Some of the learners sat on the floor especially in forms 1 and 2. Some sat on benches without writing surfaces (see figure below).

Vending was also seen to be allowed within the school premises. Learners were seen selling sweets at the school. Even the bursar was also engaged in selling of fizzes to the learners and teachers during break time.

LEARNERS

A lot of learners at Airport Private Secondary School came from rural areas like Galawenda, Mazale and other surrounding villages. Some learners came from distant places such that they rode bicycles so as to arrive in school in good time before classes commenced (see picture of bicycles that some of the learners rode)

Bicycles belonging to some learners

Most of the learners at Airport Private Secondary School come from low and middle level income groups. It was learnt during the focus group discussions that their parents were either working or doing businesses while some were small-scale farmers. Some of the learners had radios, cell phones and bicycles among other assets in their homes. Nevertheless it appeared some of the learners still struggled to raise the K4, 500 (about US$ 11) tuition fees.

Registration of learners at the school was automatic so long the learners and guardians filled a registration form and signed for the rules and regulations for the school. Community day secondary schools around the school were the major suppliers of learners to the school. Form one learners came straight from primary schools if they were not selected to government secondary schools.

Enrolment

When gauged against enrolment of learners in other nearby private secondary schools in the area, enrolment at the school was comparatively higher and at the time of the study, had more girls than boys. The learners as well as the head teacher and director of the school attributed the high enrolment to the hard working spirit of the teachers as well as the affordable school fees in addition to good performance of learners at the school. It was also learnt that there was a

practice at the school that when a learner brings two new learners to enroll at the school he/she was given a T-shirt as part of an incentive or motivation to lure in more new learners from other schools. Table below displays the enrolment of learners at the school.

Enrolment of learners

Form	2008			2009			2010 - 2011			2011 - 2012			2012 - 2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	22	28	50	30	43	73	33	47	80	30	55	85	36	34	70
2	27	41	68	34	48	82	39	50	89	31	61	92	61	41	102
3	07	10	17	14	08	22	11	13	24	12	15	27	27	26	53
4	08	11	19	09	13	22	12	14	26	14	17	31	15	15	30
Total	**64**	**90**	**154**	**87**	**112**	**199**	**95**	**124**	**219**	**87**	**148**	**235**	**139**	**116**	**255**

As already highlighted, the school appeared to register an increase in enrolment in each subsequent year. Girls outnumbered boys in almost all the forms across all the five academic years except in 2012/2013 academic year.

There was no statistical data on dropout and migration however the learners during focus group discussions felt that migration of learners out of the school is far much higher than learners migrating into the school because of un-conducive teaching and learning environment where teachers are not qualified and infrastructure not adequate.

Performance

Performance data for the school is depicted in Table below. However there was no data on number of boys and girls who passed JCE in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years. Similarly there was no data for boys and girls who passed MSCE in 2010/2011 academic year.

Learner performance

	2010/2011			2011/2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	50	39	89	61	31	92
Number of learners who passed JCE	-	-	71	-	-	83
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	14	12	26	17	14	31
Number of learners who passed MSCE	-	-	19	10	12	22
Number of learners selected to University	0	0	0	0	0	0

Calculations from the raw data given in the table above, shows that percentage pass rate for JCE in 2010/2011 was 79.8% while in 2011/2012 was 90.2%. For MSCE the pass rate in 2010/2011

academic year was 73.1% while in 2011/2012 it was 71%. No learner was selected for university education in both academic years. The percentage pass rate confirmed reports from the learners as well the head teacher and director that performance of learners at the school was relatively good.

In comparing government and for profit private secondary schools, learners explained that learners who go to government schools were selected based on outstanding performance, teachers are qualified and in most cases the infrastructure is adequate. Further, the learners are well disciplined and they wear school uniform always. When the learners were asked about what attracted them to the school. They mentioned that they were attracted to the school because school fees was affordable, performance was high in forms 2 and 4, and that the school was nearer to their homes. There was also no registration fees compared to other schools.

TEACHERS

There were 8 teachers at the school and all of them were male. Two teachers possessed Diplomas in Science and humanities respectively while the rest of the teachers had MSCE as their highest level of academic qualification. Four of the teachers were qualified i.e. had a teaching certificate while the other four were un-qualified. Two were part time teachers while 6 were full time teachers. Two youngest teachers at the school were within the 20 – 25 age group; one was within the 26 – 30 age group; three were in the 31 - 35 age group; while the remaining two teachers fell within the 36 – 40 age group.

The starting salary of the Diploma teachers was at MK25, 000.00 (about US$ 62.5) while the starting salary of the MSCE holders was at MK15, 000.00 (US$ 37.5). The salary of teachers with MSCE qualification but had a teaching certificate were higher than that of teachers with MSCE but without a teaching certificate. The salaries were realized from the school fees and were paid as cash at the end of the month. When asked if there were any non-salary benefits to the teachers, the head teacher as well as the teachers and the director of the school concurred that there were no any other non-salary benefits at the school. Nevertheless the teachers were paid salary advances when need be.

Due to unavailability of houses for teachers at the school, some of the teachers operated from very distant places. One teacher explained that:

> I come from very far. It takes me about one hour cycling to reach this place. When my bicycle breaks down, I have no option but to walk and this takes me over two hours. Lack of accommodation for teachers is really a serious concern in private schools.

Nevertheless the teachers indicated that they were attracted to teach at the school because the school appeared to be a stable school. This was evidenced by minimal staff turnover at the school as only two teachers left the school in the academic year. One was expelled due to misconduct while the other left for further studies.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school mainly depended on money paid as school fees by learners. The fees were K4, 500.00 (about US $11.25) per learner per term and they were paid termly through direct cash or through cheques and others through bank deposits. Some learners struggled to pay the whole amount. Such learners were allowed to pay by instalments upon negotiations with their guardians. If learners could not afford to pay, they were sent home up until they pay. If still not able to pay, they inevitably dropped out of school. During the time of the study (close to the end of the term), about 40 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees and over 30 learners had stopped schooling because of non-payment of school fees according to the bursar for the school.

Nevertheless the school had some form of subsidies or scholarships for orphans and very needy learners. For instance it was learnt that the management of the school had an agreement with the nearby orphanage that sent close to 40 learners to the school that they should be paying lesser fees than the other learners. This was endorsed and such learners were paying MK4, 000.00 (US$10). Further, the management of the school had offered scholarships to 8 very needy learners at the school.

The school did not have its own bank account and so used the director's bank account and the account was not audited. All other expenses for the school such as water bills, report cards, school developments etc. were covered by the school through the fees paid by the learners as well as the donations received from the well-wishers abroad. However learners bought their own writing materials, textbooks as well as school uniforms. They also contributed towards educational or sporting trips whenever available. The director just topped up for such trips. In times of school entertainment, the learners were asked to pay for it.

TRADING PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

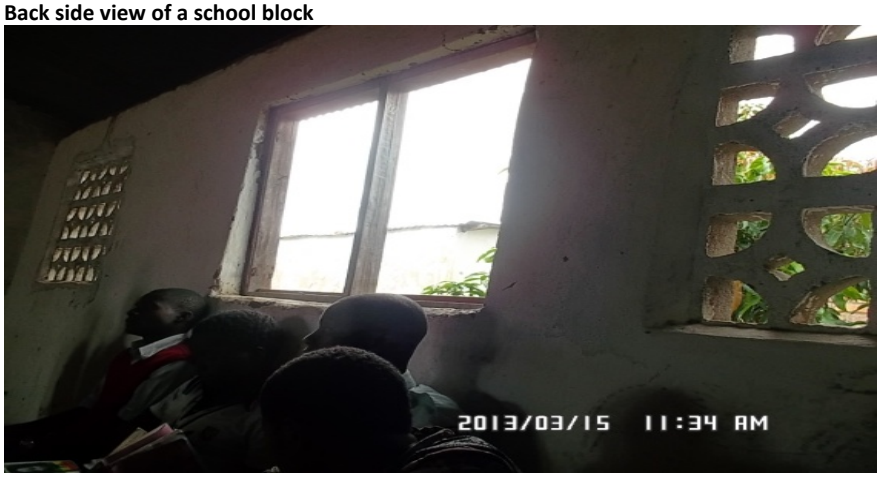
Trading Private Secondary School was situated at Chimbiya trading centre about 36 kilometres from Dedza Boma going towards Lilongwe. The school was located in a residential area. The director of the school also owned the land on which the school was built. The Head teacher of the school managed the school as the owner of the school had other businesses, which occupied much of his time. Trading Private Secondary School was a mixed school accommodating both day scholars and boarders and had boarding facilities for both boys and girls. At the time of the study there were 107 day scholars and 33 boarders. The school was established in 2006 and was registered with government in 2008. The school was a fully-fledged school with forms 1 to 4. The forms were all single streamed. Further the school was an examination centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school had most of the basic infrastructure required of a secondary school. It had 4 classrooms, a head teacher's office, a staffroom, a storeroom, water source, a laboratory, a library, hostels, kitchen, computer, 4 boys' toilets, 6 girls' toilets and 2 toilets for staff in addition to having a fence around the school premises and electricity. It did not have a playground and teacher houses.

The classrooms were all in one continuous school block made of burnt bricks, corrugated iron sheets and cemented floors. However the windows had no windowpanes though they had window frames. For more ventilation and better lighting, additional windows made of porous concrete blocks were available on the back of the classroom wall (see picture below).

Back side view of a school block



The classrooms were large enough for the enrolment of learners at the school. The desks were also adequate for the number of learners in the class (see picture below)

Desks at Trading Secondary School

The head teacher's office and the staffroom were under one administration block. There was a computer in the head teacher's office that serviced the school. Other necessary records such as bank account numbers, number of teachers and their responsibilities as well as the school timetable were well displayed in the office. The school did not have a good source of water however there was a protected well close to the school that was used as a source of water for the school (see picture below).

Source of water at Trading Secondary School

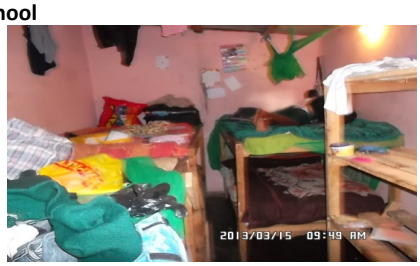
The school had a small room that was meant to be a laboratory though it appeared it was not necessarily being used by the learners rather it was used as a storeroom of Laboratory materials and equipment (see picture below).

Laboratory of Trading Secondary School

In addition to the small laboratory, the school also had small library that did not have enough stock of books.

The hostels for the learners were not adequate as there were only 5 small rooms for the boarders at the school (3 small rooms for the girls and 2 for the boys). This caused congestion at the hostels such that there was minimal space between the beds thereby making movements difficult (see picture below).

Beds in hostels at Trading Secondary School

The kitchen was located next to the boy's hostels which gave no privacy for boys. The learners complained of poor hygiene at the kitchen such that they had resorted to preparing their own meals rather than eating those provided by the school. However, the practice is not allowed and condoned by the management of the Trading Secondary School. Figure below shows the kitchen at Trading Private Secondary School.

Kitchen at Trading Secondary School


The school also had electricity and this enabled the learners to study in the classrooms even during the night. Most importantly the school had a good fence round its premises that helped keep out intruders thereby separating the school from the houses it was surrounded with.

LEARNERS

Most of the learners at the school were from low-level income groups while others were from middle class families as their parents were working as civil servants and others were doing small scale business such as selling of some farm produce. The learners came from the surrounding villages while others came from nearby trading centres such as Chimbiya, Lobi and Mgundadzuwa trading centres. Those from Lobi and Mgundadzuwa were boarders as those were long distances from the school.

The learners were a mixed group as some came from government community day secondary schools; others from other private schools; and yet others straight from primary schools. During registration the school demanded a transfer letter, presence of a guardian, and signing of a registration form that stipulated the rules and regulations governing conduct of the learners while at the school.

Enrolment

The total enrolment of the school stood at 140 learners with 72 boys and 68 girls. The learners said that the enrolment was higher when compared to enrolment of learners in other surrounding schools in the area. The reasons for the high enrolment were given as: Trading is an old school as such it was more stable when compared with other schools; the school had boarding facilities; there was no government school around the area to compete with; and that the school was an examination centre. Availability of a library, laboratory and electricity at the school was an added advantage.

Table below displays the enrolment data for the 2012/2013 academic year. There was no data for the previous years. It appeared record keeping was problematic.

Learner enrolment in 2012/2013 academic year

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1	20	17	37
2	13	20	33
3	21	19	40
4	18	12	30
Total	**72**	**68**	**140**

Trend of enrolment was not possible to establish because of the unavailability of previous records however the head teacher mentioned that there was an increase in the current academic year when compared to the previous year's enrolment. Boys seemed to enrol more than girls. Since it had a boarding facility, there were 14 boys and 19 girls that were boarders at the school.

Similarly there were no records for dropout and incomplete records for migration. Table below highlights the data for migration out of the school in the 2012/2013 academic year

Learner migration in 2012/2013 academic year

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1	3	2	5
2	1	2	3
3	2	1	3

4	0	2	2
Total	**6**	**7**	**13**

Thirteen learners migrated out of the school in one academic year. This gave an impression that although the enrolment was increasing, there were still some other factors that were pushing learners out of the school. In fact in one of the focus group discussions, learners commented that:

> Migration out of learners at this school is inevitable because the school doesn't have adequate qualified teachers, and the owner of the school just changes the teachers whenever he wants to. The owner of the school also increases school fees almost every term. These are some of the main factors that force learners to leave this school.

Performance

According to the learners as well as the head teacher, performance at Trading Private Secondary School was good due to the fact that the teachers were hard working. The school also boasted of enough teaching and learning materials, the availability of a library though it did not have enough books and the availability of electricity at the campus were felt to be contributory to the good performance of the learners. Table below depicts learner performance at the school.

Learner performance

	2010/2011			**2011/2012**		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	23	26	49	13	18	31
Number of learners who passed JCE	15	17	32	10	14	24
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	27	24	51	25	31	56
Number of learners who passed MSCE	12	20	32	19	25	44
Number of learners selected to University	0	0	0	-	-	-

From the figures in Table above, 77% and 79% of the learners passed JCE and MSCE respectively in the 2011/2012 academic year. Considering that the national average performance rates were much lower than this, then learner performance at Trading secondary school would be considered as good.

TEACHERS

There were nine teachers at the school 8 of whom were male and one was a female teacher. Two male teachers had degrees (in theology and education respectively); 5 male teachers had diplomas in the fields of philosophy, management, business, theology, rural development and environment respectively. The other male teacher had an MSCE with a certificate in economics. The female teacher had a diploma in Education**.**

Of the 9 teachers, only two teachers were qualified. The rest did not have teaching certificates. One teacher was a part time teacher while the 8 teachers were full time. Two teachers were in the 26 – 30 age group; four were in 31 – 35 age group; another two teachers were in the 41 – 45 age group while one teacher was in the 41 – 45 age group.

The starting salary of teachers at the school was MK40, 000.00 (about US$100). The salary was paid monthly through bank transfers. The salary was sourced from the school fees. Teachers at the school were also entitled to other non-salary benefits such as house allowance of MK6, 000.00 (about US$15) per month. Teachers were also supported during bereavements and weddings upon assessment of the need and based on humanitarian grounds. It was also learnt that the starting salary was negotiable depending on experience and qualifications.

Staff turnover at the school was high as 6 teachers were recruited in the 2012/2013 academic year while 6 teachers left the school in the same academic year. It was said that 2 teachers left on personal reasons while the 4 teachers were dismissed. Recruitment of teachers was done through oral interviews following advertisements in media houses. There was a board that was responsible for interviewing the teachers. Contracts for teachers were available but teachers were at liberty on whether to sign the contracts or not. Length of the contracts also depended on agreement between the teacher and the director of the school.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school charged K10, 000.00 as school fees for day scholars and K40, 000.00 for boarders per term and this was paid termly through direct cash or through cheque deposits or bank transfers. It was said that since most of the guardians were farmers, they afforded the school fees by paying in instalments as they would not afford paying the whole amount at once. Some of the learners paid for themselves using money sourced through piecework after school hours. Some learners even did small-scale businesses such as carrying people on bicycles (Kabaza) and charging of cell phones.

Learners that could not afford the payments dropped out of school unless well-wishers came to their rescue. For instance it was learnt that the teachers at the school mobilized themselves and paid school fees for a girl who was neglected by her family. At the time of the survey, 4 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees while 7 learners had dropped out due to non-payment of school fees. However there was a provision where the owner granted scholarships to very needy learners at the school. Eight learners were accessing the scholarship at the time of the survey.

The school had two bank accounts (one with New Building Society and the other with First Merchant Bank). It was learnt that the accounts were audited by an external auditor. Though the head teacher was sure about an external auditor auditing the accounts, he had no details of the auditor.

TARMAC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Tarmac Private Secondary School was situated in Lunzu Township along the Blantyre – Mwanza main road just about 5 metres off the road. It was a day secondary school that was run as a family business. The director of the school was a retired primary school teacher who also once served as a Primary Education Advisor as well as a Desk officer at one of the District Education Offices.

At the time of the survey, the school was just in its nascent stage as it was established in 2012/2013 academic year and had only about 27 learners. The school was not yet registered with any private school bodies let alone the government. The school was a full one streamed private secondary school operating on rented premises. The director indicated that he was being charged MK17, 500 (about US$ 43.75) for rentals every month. The school was on a very small piece of land with no room for extension.

The school was not an examination centre as such the anticipation was that learners would be sitting for their national examinations at the nearby Lunzu Government Secondary School.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school was within one block of classrooms. The block had four small classrooms that could accommodate a maximum of 25 learners. The roofing of the school block was thatch (grass) on one side and Iron sheets on the other side. The windows had no window panes let alone window frames. The floor was cemented though the cement was peeling off in other places. Though the walls were made of burnt bricks, the workmanship seemed to have been of low quality. All the classrooms had no doors (see picture below).

Tarmac private secondary school

The classrooms did not have desks rather benches which were not even adequate for the small enrolment. For instance form 4 had 11 learners but only had 3 benches, fortunately on the day of the visit only four learners in form four were present (see picture below).

Benches and learners in form 4 class

From the picture above, coupled with remarks from the director, it appeared there was no uniform policy at the school. The director commented that the uniform policy was available but was not very strictly enforced but used with cautious so as not to lose out learners in the process.

The school did not have a head teacher's office, staffroom, storeroom, library, laboratory, playground, computer and other basic infrastructure required of a private secondary. Further, the school did not have a water source such that learners used a community borehole some 50 metres away from the school. Though located within Lunzu trading centre, the school did not have electricity. In terms of a library however, the learners accessed a nearby Lunzu Resource Centre and the director of the school paid K300 per month for the service.

The school had one toilet block containing 2 toilets for boys and 2 toilets for girls. The toilets for boys and girls were housed in one block and this compromised the privacy of either gender. The toilets were not in a good condition and produced bad smell. Some of them did not have door shutters See picture below).

One of the toilets at the school

LEARNERS

The director, the teachers and the learners all concurred that the enrolment at the school was low since the school was just new and the structures were not in a good condition to attract learners**.** Majority of learners at the school came from rural villages like Undani, Gawani, and Maliana. Very few came from the trading centre. Those from the trading centre, their parents were working and those from rural areas, their parents were doing small scale businesses.

In registering learners, the director demands a letter from previous secondary school. If the learner is in form one, the director demands evidence that the learner indeed passed Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education Examinations. If the learner is starting in Form three, he demands evidence that the learner passed Junior Certificate of Education examinations. He said all this is done for quality assurance purposes.

Enrolment

At the time of the study the school enrolment stood at 27 with 10 boy learners and 17 girl learners. See details of enrolment in Table below.

Learner enrolment in the 2012/2013 academic year

Form	**Learner enrolment**		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**
1	1	1	2
2	4	7	11
3	1	2	3
4	4	7	11
Total	**10**	**17**	**27**

As evidenced from the table above, learner enrolment at the school was very low. The director remarked that:

> When a school is just starting, people lack confidence and trust in the school such that they wait till they see how learners perform at the end of the academic year.

There were more learners in forms two and four compared to the learners in forms one and three. Again there were more girls than boys at the school.

Learner migration

It was learnt that the school attracted learners from other schools at the same time lost learners to other schools. The director and the learners attributed the 'migrating in' of learners to quality learning at the school as there were three teachers who were students at Mzuzu University and attributed the 'migrating out' of learners to problems in realizing school fees.

TEACHERS

The school had 5 teachers and all of them were male. Two were part time teachers as they were students from Mzuzu University and were on holiday, while 3 were full time teachers. The director alleged that once the holiday is over, he would engage the services of part time teachers from nearby government secondary school as government teachers have the right qualifications. The director was also a teacher at the school. Age wise, two of the teachers were in the 26 – 30 age group; one was in the 31 – 35 age group; while two were in the 41 – 45 age group.

Salary wise, it was learnt that the teachers were paid MK500 (about US$ 1.25) per teaching day regardless of qualification. The salaries were paid as cash at the end of the month. No other incentives were available at the school. Since enrolment was low at the school, the school fees alone would not suffice the teachers' salaries; hence the director supplemented the salaries with money from his own shop and pick-up business.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

School fees was pegged at MK5,000 (about US$12.5) per term and was payable in instalments if wholesome payment was not affordable. At the time of the study, 3 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees and 5 learners had stopped schooling because of non-payment of school fees.

Challenges

Tarmac Private Secondary School was a new school but had many challenges that could destroy its prospects. Some of the challenges included;

- The school was just a few metres away from the main road. When big vehicles pass by, they make a lot of noise thereby disrupting teaching and learning at the school.
- The school did not have a water source as such relied on a community borehole and this inconvenienced learners a they had to travel some distance to access the water at the community borehole
- The school did not have electricity. This gave problems to those who lived nearby the school and would want to study during the night.
- The school did not have a library and a laboratory which are very useful assets for quality education

- The school did not have a playing ground, toilets were in a bad condition, desks were not adequate and the school did not have enough teaching and learning materials.

HILLY PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Hilly Private Secondary School was located in Dedza District about 36kms from the Boma and 7kms north of Chimbiya Trading Centre along the Lilongwe M1 Road. The school was owned by a business lady. Since the owner conducted her business in Lilongwe, the day-to-day affairs of the school were being managed by her brother. Hence the school was being run as a family business. Hilly Private Secondary School was a mixed school that had both day scholars and boarders only that the boarding facility was extended to girls only. At the time of the study, there were only 9 girls who were boarders. The school premises belonged to the owner of the school. The name of the school originated from the hills that were next to the school and were seven in number (see picture below)

Hills next to Hilly secondary school

The school was registered with the Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA). It was a full secondary school with a single stream in each of the four forms. The school was not an examination centre and learners sat for their national examinations at Linthipe Government Secondary School which was a few kilometers away from the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school was at a newly opened land which the owner bought from local villagers around. In terms of infrastructure, the school had four classrooms; a hostel, 1 girls' toilet and 2 boys' toilets. A head teacher's office and a staffroom were still under construction. The school did not have

teacher's houses, storerooms, library, computer, playground, electricity and reliable water source on campus among other notable basic infrastructure required of a secondary school. Nevertheless the girls' hostel used solar energy though in some cases it proved to be unreliable.

The classrooms were spacious and in two classroom blocks. It appeared the school was still under construction as two of the classrooms were not cemented though all of them were roofed with corrugated iron sheets. Doors of the classrooms were not lockable and some of the windows had neither window frames nor window panes (see picture below)

Classroom block at Hilly Secondary School

Desks seemed to be available in all the four classrooms, however they were not adequate for the school enrolment as number of learners on one desk exceeded the official seating capacity of two learners per desk (see picture)

Desks at Hilly Private Secondary School

The hostel for girls was not fenced; it had no kitchen as such cooking was done under a tree. Beds in the hostel were not enough and there was no place for learners to keep their property. Beds were made from locally made planks there by making them less durable. Further there were no mattresses for the girls to sleep on (refer to picture below).

Beds in the girls' hostel at Hilly Private Secondary School

LEARNERS

A lot of learners at the school came from rural areas like Chafwake, Kabango, Kalonga and Chimbiya trading centre. Most of the learners came from middle class families as their parents were civil servants, business persons or farmers. They had assets like radios, televisions, cell phones and bicycles as revealed during the focus group discussions.

Enrolment

Enrollment was low at the school because the school was relatively new. In total there were 65 learners at the school of whom 37 were boys and 28 were girls. Boys' enrolment was higher than that of girls. Of the 65 learners, 56 learners were day scholars while 9 learners were boarders. However there was no data for the previous years to help defer whether the school had a history of higher boy enrolment. Table below illustrates the enrolment data for the 2012/2013 academic year

Learner enrolment in 2012/2013 academic year

Form	Boys	Girls	Total
1	15	10	25
2	3	7	10
3	11	2	13
4	8	9	17
Total	**37**	**28**	**65**

Similarly there was no statistical data for dropout and migration due to poor record keeping. However, on migration, learners disclosed that more learners migrated to the school when compared to those that migrated out of the school because the buildings were new, there was a boarding hostel for girls, the place was conducive for education, the performance of learners was good, and their school fees was affordable. Teachers at the school were also enough and they taught well according to the learners.

Performance

Again performance data was not readily available, nevertheless, the head teacher with the assistance of some staff at the school managed to recall number of learners who sat for national examinations at the school as well as those who passed in the 2011/2012 academic year. Eighty-nine percent of the learners passed their JCE examination while 64% of the learners passed their MSCE examinations. None was selected for university education. The table below Shows the raw data

Learner performance

	2010/2011			2011/2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	-	-	-	-	-	9
Number of learners who passed JCE	-	-	-	-	-	8
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	-	-	-	-	-	14
Number of learners who passed MSCE	-	-	-	-	-	9

Number of learners selected to University	-	-	-	-	-	0

The percentage pass rates for both JCE and MSCE were above the national average for the academic year, confirming the assertions from the learners that learner performance was good at the school.

TEACHERS

In total there were 8 teachers at the school and all of them were male. One teacher had a Diploma in education; another had a diploma in theology; while the rest had only MSCE as their highest academic qualification. Three teachers were qualified while 5 teachers were not qualified. Two teachers were part time teachers while 6 teachers were full time. Two teachers were within the 20- 25 age group; one teacher was in the 26 – 30 age group; four teachers in the 31 – 35 age group; and one teacher was in the 46 – 50 age group.

The starting salary for the Diploma teachers was MK35, 000.00 (about US$ 87.5) while the MSCE teachers was MK25, 000.00 (US$ 62.5). It was also revealed that experience was considered in salary adjustments. The salaries were sourced from the learners' school fees however, proceeds from the owner's other personal businesses, supplemented the salary. The teachers were paid monthly through bank transfers. No other benefits or incentives apart from the salary were given to the teachers.

The process of recruiting teachers for the school started with advertisements in newspapers and other media houses. People then applied for the teaching posts following the advertisements. Some people just applied even without advertisements. Then shortlisted applicants were invited for both oral and practical interviews. No contracts were signed by the teachers when they were offered the job.

When teachers were asked what attracted them to teach at the school, mention was made of the good heartedness of the owner of the school. One of the teachers commented that:

> The owner of this school has a caring spirit. She even uses her own resources to keep the school running and honors the teachers' salaries in good time. Teachers see a future at this school as it appears to be a stable school

Statistical data on number of teachers who left the school in the academic year, verified the above sentiments as no teacher left the school in the academic year. The school did not have a bank account rather it used the owner's personal bank account.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school fees were K40,000 for boarders and K8,000 for day scholars. The learners also paid for sports trips and graduation expenses where necessary. They bought their own textbooks and

writing materials as well as school uniform. Fees were paid termly through direct cash. Payment of fees through instalments was allowed to those learners who did not manage to pay the whole amount at one goal. The school provided scholarships to 3 very needy learners. If learners were unable to pay the fees, they were sent home unless, they were extremely star performers and at the same time very needy. At the time of the study, about 17 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees and none had left schooling due to non-payment of school fees.

CHALLENGES

Although the school was located at a suitable place for education, there were challenges that needed attention. The challenges included: Inadequate desks, no water source, no electricity, no text books for learners, no security, inadequate toilets, inadequate qualified teachers, no laboratory for practical subjects, no library, the school was not an examination centre, doors for classrooms were not lockable, no kitchen at the hostel, no dining hall and no place at the hostel where boarders could put their belongings. They also did not have their own playground but used a primary school ground which sometimes they were denied access. Further, lack of teachers' houses at the school resulted in teachers operating from distant places which in some cases inconvenienced classes as they would come to school late or could not report for classes at all because of bad weather e.g. rains

GRAVE PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Grave private secondary school was located in one of the densely populated areas of Zomba town called Chikanda, about 2.5 kilometres from town and about one kilometre from Chancellor College, a constituent College of the University of Malawi. The school was confined on a small piece of land with no room or space for major extension. The school was established in the year 2003 and became registered with ISAMA in 2011. It was a single streamed full secondary school. The director of the school also owned the school site and worked with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and was also a pastor for KICC ministries. Grave Private Secondary School was not an examination centre, as such learners from this school sat for their JCE and MSCE examinations at a nearby government secondary school called Malindi Secondary School.

According to the deputy head teacher of the school, the Director opened the school after noticing that learners who did not do well in their PSLCE examinations or who were not selected to government secondary schools were facing problems in attaining secondary education. He therefore thought of giving them an opportunity to access secondary education through this private secondary school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school had four permanent classrooms to accommodate each of the four classes. However under construction during the time of the study was a block to host a library and a staff room (see picture below).

Walking around the school resulted in the observation that the school blocks were not in a good condition and the corrugated iron roofs could easily be blown off by wind. Further, classrooms were not lockable so children from surrounding villages sometimes defecated in the classrooms after learners had left.

Desks and writing surfaces were available at the school though not in adequate quantities to suffice the school enrolment. The focus group discussions alluded to a scramble for seats and writing surfaces at the school and mentioned that this greatly affected their participation and concentration during the teaching and learning process. One learner commented that:

> Learners who do not have seats find it difficult to stand up and answer a question from a teacher as a result those without access to a seat just remain silent even though they have answers to the questions raised by the teachers.

Another focus group discussion attributed migration of girls from the school to other schools to the inadequacy of desks at the school. The school did not have basic infrastructure such as staffroom, storeroom, library, teachers' houses, laboratories and electricity. However it had a small head teacher's office that served as both a storeroom and a staffroom (see picture below)

The school had four pit latrines, two for boys and two for girls, but no one seemed to take care of or clean them. Since there was no security at the school, let alone a school fence, these latrines were also used by passers-by (see picture of toilet below).

Although Grave Private Secondary school did not have its own sports field, its school timetable had a slot for extracurricular activities. Learners at the school used a playground belonging to a nearby government primary school whenever they wanted to play football as well as net-ball. Further the school had a reliable water source in form of a standpipe on campus. It also had a uniform policy though the teachers complained of difficulties in enforcing it as some unruly learners did not want to wear school uniform.

LEARNERS

Learners at this school came from areas surrounding the school. Major catchment locations included Chikanda, Police, Mapale and Mpondabwino areas. According to the learners as well as the teachers, learners did not stay long at the school because of poor performance, indiscipline and inadequate infrastructure. They would rather join the night/open schools offered by government secondary schools. This meant that the open schools were the main competitors of this school.

Enrolment

In 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years, Grave Private Secondary School had a higher enrolment of boys than girls. It was learnt that the school had a good history in soccer competitions and so boys were attracted to the school because of the good performance in football. Table below shows the enrolment data for the school in the past three years.

Form	2010 – 2011			2011 – 2012			2012 – 2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	15	27	42	22	33	55	19	18	37
2	12	8	20	26	31	57	25	34	59
3	14	8	22	22	10	32	22	22	44
4	11	6	17	18	8	26	22	18	40
Total	**56**	**49**	**101**	**88**	**82**	**170**	**88**	**92**	**180**

It appears that there was a trend of increasing enrolment in each subsequent year although the increase from 2012 to 2013 academic years was very minimal.

Discipline at the school appeared not to be vigorously enforced and this discouraged some parents from sending their children to this school as alluded to by the learners. For instance, it was learnt that a good percentage of boys smoke marijuana (chamba) and drink beer. These learners even fight with their teachers but no substantial punishments are given to them. Unfortunately the school is located in an area which is well known for beer brewing and so these beer brewers, sell their beer to the learners.

Further, the learners at the school did not adhere to the timetabled time for knocking off. It was reported that each and every one chose his or her time to go home. Teachers also alluded to indiscipline of learners at the school and mentioned that it was difficult to enforce discipline at the school because the learners were unruly due to the effects of the marijuana.

Dropout

Dropout of learners at the school appears to be very high when compared against the school enrolment. For instance the overall dropout rate in the 2010/2011 academic year was 23% while that for 2011/2012 academic year was 45% (calculated against the overall enrolment).

Form	2010 – 2011			2011 – 2012		
	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	2	6	8	9	17	26
2	3	2	5	18	6	24
3	6	1	7	12	3	15
4	1	2	3	9	2	11
Total	**12**	**11**	**23**	**48**	**28**	**76**

The information in the table shows that slightly more boys than girls dropped out of the school.

Migration

Information about the migration of learners in and out of the school has been presented in the table below.

Form	Learners migrating in			Learners migrating out		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	2	3	5	1	7	8
2	2	2	4	4	6	10
3	1	3	4	2	2	4
4	1	2	3	1	0	1
Total	**6**	**10**	**16**	**8**	**15**	**23**

Migration of learners out of the school was higher than the migration of learners into the school and girls seemed to migrate more than the boys.

Performance

The school had a poor history of performance especially for MSCE examinations. Only one learner passed MSCE examinations in the 2010/2011 academic year while only four learners passed in the 2011/2012 academic year. The JCE examination results over the same period were also not very impressive (see table below).

Year	JCE			MSCE		
	Entered	Passed	%	Entered	Passed	%
2010-2011	19	14	74%	40	30	75%
2011-2012	10	1	10%	13	4	31%

The teachers felt performance of learners at the school was poor because of the kind of learners who enrolled at the school. They explained that most of the learners were of poor quality academically; they were also undisciplined; and very slow in grasping concepts in class. Some teachers attributed this calibre of learners to the location of the school as it was situated in a place where there was too much social activity including local beer brewing.

TEACHERS

The school had eight teachers who were all male. Two of the teachers were qualified to teach in secondary school while six of them were not qualified. Amongst the unqualified teachers one of them had a Diploma in theology, two had Diplomas in philosophy and the rest were MSCE holders. Three of the teachers at the school were in the 26 - 30 age category; two were in the 31 – 35; while the other three were between 36 – 40 years old.

Salary wise, teachers with just an MSCE qualification received K17, 000 (about US$ 42.5) as a starting salary while the teachers with Diploma got K20, 000.00 (about US$ 50) as a starting salary. Considering that there were no any other benefits for the teachers at the school, the teachers lamented that the salary was too low to suffice their daily needs let alone motivate them to work hard in school. The salaries were received monthly at the end of the month and were paid through bank transfers.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Grave Private Secondary School was financed by school fees from learners. Each learner paid MK7,000.00 per term. With a total enrolment of 180 learners, it meant the school generated about MK3,780,000 per year (in 3 terms). The major expenditure was on salaries which ranged from MK17,000 to MK20,000 per teacher per month depending on the qualification. This meant on salaries alone, the school spent about K1, 920,000.00 per year. However, some expenses went towards paying supporting staff, water bills, sporting activities, report cards, text books and others. The remainder was what could be considered as profit from the school business for the owner of the school.

The fees were collected termly from each and every learner in cash. If a learner could not afford to pay the fees up until the end of the grace period, he/she was sent back home to collect the

money. At the time of the study, about 67 learners had not yet finished paying for their school fees and 2 learners had completely dropped out of school due to non-payment of school fees.
It was further learnt that the school had a bank account and that this account was internally audited by the proprietor himself.

FOREIGN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION
Foreign was a day co-education private secondary school located within Dedza town just behind the main bus depot. The school was run as a family business. This school was established on 3rd September, 2012. The school was not yet registered with ISAMA or PRISAM. The environment for the school was quite good and when people from the Ministry of education came to visit the premises they made a recommendation that it was conducive for learning.

INFRASTRUCTURE
There was one school block comprising four classrooms, a library and a room intended to be a computer laboratory. There was also an administration office. The school had excellent classrooms with ceiling. They were very spacious and well ventilated. In the classes there were talking walls. The classrooms had two writing boards, one in front and the other one at the back. In our opinion, the school was indeed purposely built for a secondary school.

The toilets were also in good condition. They had flash facilities and they were enough to cater for all learners. The girls' toilets were separated from the boys' toilets.

Sources of water for the school were taps which were scattered at the campus. The school had a library though it was small with very few books. However, the books were adequate given the number learners enrolled at the school. It was reported that the electricity company (ESCOM) had not yet connected power to the school. As such, learners did not have access to computer lessons and the room that was meant for a computer lab was not being used. The head teacher

reported that electricity would come soon as all paper work had been done. The school has no sports field and learners said that they had never played games since they opened.

All learners were seated on beautiful desks and given the few numbers of learners, there were more than enough desks in all forms. The school had not yet introduced a uniform and they were not very strict about it.

LEARNERS

Since the school was in its first academic year, it was not surprising that it had very few learners compared to other schools. Teachers and the head teacher hoped that more learners would come to join them since the school was believed to be the best private school in the district in terms of infrastructure and other learning materials.

The majority of the learners came from the semi-urban areas of Dedza, and only a few were from typical rural areas. There were only 32 learners in all forms. The number of girls at the school was higher than the number of boys. Enrolment for the school is presented in Table below.

Learner enrolment in 2012/2013 Academic year

	2012/2013 Academic Year		
Form	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	2	1	3
2	0	4	4
3	3	7	10
4	7	8	15
Total	12	20	32

TEACHERS

The school had recruited 10 teachers and 6 were male but on part time basis. Some of these teachers also were teachers in the surrounding public schools (Umbwi and Dedza secondary schools). There were two other teachers who were on holiday at school in the in universities where they were doing their studies. Only 3 male teachers and one female teacher were on full

time basis. Nine out (8 males and one female) of the 10 teachers were qualified. Then remaining other teacher did not have any teaching qualification. The ages of the teachers have been presented in Table below.

Age range of teachers

Age range	Number of teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
Below 20	0	0	0
Between 20-25	0	1	1
Between 26-30	0	0	0
Between 31-35	2	0	2
Between 36-40	4	0	4
Between 41-45	2	0	2
Between 46-50	0	0	0
Above 50	0	0	0

Teacher's salaries came from the school fees collected from the learners plus the Director's personal money. The salary for teachers was MK25,000.00 payable monthly in form of cash. Teachers received no other benefits apart from the salary.
The system for recruiting teachers was no different from the other schools. The right candidates applied for the position and then got shortlisted to be interviewed by the board. The interviews were usually oral.

According to the head teacher and the pupils, teachers at the school were described as dedicated and committed to their work. They prepared very well for the lessons and gave adequate notes to the learners. Learners also said that they freely interacted with their teachers.

The school was offering the national curriculum at both MSCE and JCE levels. There was no restriction on the subjects one would want to sit for examinations. However, one had to take a minimum of at least 6 subjects.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

It was reported that when the school had just been opened, the fees were pegged at K25, 000.00 per learner per term. However, the Director had to rethink about it when he noticed that there were very few learners coming to enrol at the school. He therefore reduced the fees to K14, 000.00. The fees were payable per term in instalments in form of cash or cheques.

When learners were not able to pay fees they were given a grace period of two weeks. If they failed to pay within that period they were stopped from attending classes. At the time of the visit, 6 learners had failed to pay their full fees during their first term. It was reported that two of the 6, were given school fees but they never paid the fees to the school and instead used it for their personal purposes. The school had a bank account which belonged to the owner so its accounts were not audited.

The school had just started so it was no wonder that management was still struggling to provide the necessary learning materials like books, labs, computers and chemicals. Learners also complained that the school did not have enough teachers of its own and relied on part-time teachers. It is reported that one teacher had two or more subjects to teach in all forms.

EFFORT PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Effort Private Secondary School was located within the city of Blantyre, specifically in Zingwangwa Township which was about 3.5 kms from the heart of Blantyre city. It was a day Private secondary school. Forms one to three had single stream while form four had a double stream. The school was established in 1997 and was run as a family business. It was a member of International Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA).

INFRASTRUCTURE

There were three buildings at the school, two of the blocks were classrooms (i.e. one accommodated forms one and two while the other one was occupied by forms three and four) the remaining one was used as staff room, head teacher's office and for administration services. The window frames of the classrooms were wooden and had no window panes. The classrooms appeared congested as there were inadequate desks to suffice the learner enrolment at the school. Further, some of the desks had no writing surfaces (see picture below).

The school had a library where learners borrowed books, but there was no computer lab for advanced learning, no laboratory for science subjects'' practical lessons / experiments and also there was no recreation hall for the learners to relax at times after had work in class. However, there were some chemicals and some laboratory equipment that were kept in the store rooms within the administration block. The school did not have a reliable water source instead the learners were asked to bring water in buckets which was placed at an open space within the administration block. There were cups that were used for drinking the water (see picture below).

The school had eight toilets in total which were used by both the learners and the staff. Out of these eight toilets, four were for males while the other four were for females. The female and male toilets were in separate locations and this provided the necessary privacy that one requires when nature calls. The toilets did not have a roof and were in very bad condition. Indeed, the learners complained about the same saying that "the toilets are in bad shape and also unhygienic". The head teacher however claimed that the school had spent some money for improving the sanitation at the school. There was electricity though this electricity was only in the administration block and not in the classrooms. And the unfortunate part on the electricity was that it had been disconnected by ESCOM because there was a huge unpaid bill. This was an indication that the school was struggling financially.

The school did not have adequate learning materials like textbooks. It was reported that the school had had only a few Chichewa and agriculture books for form 1. The rest of the forms had no text books. The head teacher explained that they installed some computers in the lab but due to lack of security, thieves broke the room and stole all of them. The school had an up to date master time table used by all the classes which was posted in the head teacher's office.

LEARNERS

The head teacher and the learners said that enrolment was always good. It was reported that enrolment was even better than the previous year, that is, if compared to the surrounding schools. They said this was so because the teachers at the school were had working. They also claimed that there was high standard of teaching which was coupled with low school fees which were at MK 10, 500.00 per learner per academic term. The passing rate at the school was claimed to be high. According to the respondents, this had contributed to the high enrolment being experienced at the school. In the 2012/13 academic year, the school had enrolled 131 boys and 171 girls which summed to 302 learners. This information has been presented in the table below.

Learner Enrolment for the past 5 years (2008-2012)

Form	2008			2009			2010 -2011			2011 – 2012			2012 -2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	38	43	81	37	40	77	33	34	67	30	31	61	25	30	55
2	41	43	84	44	50	94	40	48	88	37	45	82	35	40	75
3	58	52	110	52	50	103	47	50	97	45	48	93	40	43	83
4	60	68	128	57	63	120	55	62	117	52	60	112	51	58	109
Total	197	206	403	190	394	394	175	194	369	164	184	348	151	151	302

Although the school was in the urban area, most of the learners at the school came from semi urban areas of Chatha, Kampala, Mpemba, Mkanamwano, Manase, Baluti. Very few learners came from urban of Mount Pleasant, Mandala, Machinjiri, Nkolokosa, Zingwangwa and Soche. Most of the students were from middle class families. The learners were asked to pay a registration fee of Mk750.00 before they were given forms to fill and a booklet of rules and regulations of the school which was then signed by the guardian of the learner. In the academic year 2010/11 a total of 32 learners dropped out of school and in 2011/12 a total of 41 dropped out of school. This indicates that almost 13% - 14% of learners dropped out of school every year (refer to Table below)

Learner drop out in2010/11 and 2011/12 Academic Years

Form	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
1	4	1	5	5	2	7
2	2	5	7	3	6	9
3	5	5	10	4	7	11
4	1	9	10	4	10	14
Total	12	20	32	16	25	41

It was reported that number of learners migrating in to the school was greater that migrating out of the school. Information about the migration of leaners is presented in table below

Learners Migration in 2011 – 2012 Academic Year

Form	Learners Migrating In			Learners Migrating Out		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	3	2	5	2	1	3
2	4	8	12	5	7	12
3	6	7	13	5	6	11
4	4	3	7	2	1	3
Total	17	20	37	14	15	29

It can be noted from the table that the number of learners who join the school exceeded the number of those going out of the school. For instance, in 2011/2012 academic year, 37 of the

learners joined the school while 29 of the learners left the school. It was reported that the reason behind this was that learners were impressed with high quality of education at the school (high pass rate, conducive learning environment).

Performance

The performance of learners at the school was quite impressive. For instance, in the 2011/2012 Academic year, JCE pass rate was 85% and MSCE pass rate 76%. This was above the national average. The learners explained that this good performance was due to both hard working of teachers and students. Teachers were mostly present to do their job. Information on pass rate is presented in Table below.

Learner Performance in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Academic Year

	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Number of who enrolled (sat) for JCE	48	40	88	38	44	82
Number of learners who passed JCE	40	35	75	31	39	70
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for MSCE	62	55	127	59	50	109
Numbers of learners who passed MSCE	51	50	101	40	43	83
Number of learners selected to university (UNIMA)	3	4	7	2	3	5

TEACHERS

There were a total of 15 teachers at Effort Private Secondary School. Out of the 15 teachers 14 were male and only one was female. There were 5 degree holders and the rest were diploma holders. Information about teachers and their qualification has been presented in Table below

Number of teachers at the school (by academic qualification)

Qualification	**Number of Teachers**		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Degree	4	1	5
Diploma	10	0	10
MSCE	0	0	0
JCE	0	0	0
Total number of Teachers	14	1	15

It was reported that only six of the teachers at the school were qualified. The rest of the teachers did not major in education; for example there was one who had a diploma in accounting. Out of the fifteen teachers, 12 were full time teachers (11 male and 1 female). The three were on part time basis. The age ranges of these teachers are illustrate in the table below

Age range of the teachers

Age Range	Number of teachers

	Male	Female	Total
Below 20	0	0	0
Between 20-25	2	0	2
Between 26-30	3	0	3
Between 31-35	6	0	6
Between 36-40	0	0	0
Between 41-45	1	0	1
Between 46-50	2	0	2
Above 50	0	0	0

The school management reported that the salary of the teachers depended on their qualifications. Those with high qualifications were highly paid compared to those who had lower qualifications. In this case, degree holders were paid within the salary range of MK45,000 while those with diplomas were paid Mk35,000.

It was also reported that teachers were paid monthly from the funds collected from school fees. They were paid cash. The school also provided non salary benefits to the teachers (fringe benefits). It was reported that teachers were given cash loans, they were provided with coffins and transport when they were grieved, and at times medical allowances. These teachers signed one year contract when they were hired and these contracts were renewable at the end of every year.

Recruitment

There was no problem with recruitment of teachers at this school. There was also good relationship between the teachers and the head teacher/director as well as amongst the teachers themselves. The head teacher said that no teacher had stayed at the school for less than five years. They treated each other well, and there was respect among them. It was reported that there was no teacher who had left the school during the 2012/13 academic year while two were recruited.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The tuition fee was MK10,500 per learner per term. The learners only paid the tuition fees and the school uniform fees which was MK2,800 for boys and MK2,500 for girls. The learners pointed out that most of them came from middle class and so they could afford the fees because they were allowed to pay by two instalments. The fees were paid either in cash or through bank cheques. If some learners were not able to pay the fees, the head teacher said that they were given considerable period to source the money. Although the learners claimed that the school fees were on the lower side, it was reported that most of them could not afford to the extent that some dropped out of school. The school had a bank account but its accounts were not audited at all.

The teachers and the learners compared the public and private schools and this is what they had to say;

- Private schools receive rejects by the society; those selected to public school may need little assistance compared to those in private.
- Private schools are run by individuals – because they have resources. But then it is very expensive to establish a school and meet all the required standards. Thus, private schools lack learning materials compared to the public ones.
- Public schools have enough learning materials (desks, laboratories, libraries and qualified teachers) than private schools.
- Private schools do not stop learning when public schools are on strike. All in all, the strikes in public schools do not affect the private schools.
- Public schools are cheaper as compared to private ones.
- The classrooms are in good condition in public schools than in private schools.
- The public schools have strict rules, which is not the case with private schools.

Despite the negatives pointed out above about the private schools, the learners said they would still remain at Effort because there were hardworking teachers, high pass rate, accommodating administrative staff that is always ready to consider when approached with a problem. Above all the school is situated in an isolated area hence provides conducive environment for learning.

CRACK PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Crack Private Secondary School was in Blantyre located in Chimwankhunda Township, about 5km from the city centre of Blantyre. The school was built on a relatively larger area that could also accommodate expansion though not very much. The land on which the school stood was wholly owned by the school owners. There were a number of nicely constructed buildings ranging from four classrooms that accommodated the learners in forms one to four, the head teacher's office, the staff room, a laboratory, a tuck shop for learners to access groceries from within and a library room. The school was established in 2012 by the owner. The owner also had a construction company although this was the only school that he had.

The Director of the school was a senior lecturer at the Malawi Polytechnic, a constituent college under the University of Malawi. He was a lecturer in entrepreneurship and so the opening of the school was not surprising to many. The school had not been registered with the Independent Schools association of Malawi (ISAMA). According to the head teacher, the school was still in its budding stage. In addition to that, the school was not an examination centre as such the students at the school wrote their examinations at a nearby Private Secondary school. According to the students, this was an unwelcomed situation that needed to be addressed with urgency as people may doubt the seriousness of the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As already stated above, the school had relatively good facilities that could effectively support a meaningful learning and teaching processes. There were four spacious classrooms that accommodated forms one to four but the roofs were not nicely done such that the learners

complained of leaking when it rained. As such, lessons are disrupted as learners kept on shifting within the classroom in search of a space that was not leaking. In addition to that, the walls that separated the classrooms were not high enough to touch therefore this coupled with the absence of ceiling boards meant that there was overlapping of noises from different classes. On this, the learners jokingly said that they learn different lessons at one time. The classrooms were however well ventilated that they provided enough fresh air and light to the learners. The walls were well painted and this complimented the good looking of the classrooms. There were no talking walls in the classrooms i.e. no hangings that could enhance the learning process of the students.

There were enough desks in the classrooms which mean that every learner had access to a seat and a writing surface. This made it easier for the students to concentrate on the lessons because they were comfortably seated (see picture below)

The school had twenty four pit latrines, twelve for boys and the other twelve for girls. They were in separate locations as such provided the required privacy for boys and girls at the school. There were quite enough to accommodate the number of learners that the school had enrolled. The girls' toilets were in good condition but not for the boys. There were big cracks on the floor of boys' latrines which posed a very big danger to them. Although the toilets were in separate locations, they did not have doors which meant that the personal privacy which is expected when nature calls was not guaranteed. The toilets seemed not to be well looked after with very wet floors resulting from undirected urine. This was attributed to the lack of fence around the school so passers by abused the toilets. Figures below illustrate the toilets' condition.

Poor conditions of toilets and other teaching materials needed to be given a priority as this would ensure better sanitation at the school as well high teaching standards that would improve the performance of the school hence its image.

The school had a computer lab and library but both were not adequately equipped with the computers and the books respectively. The computer room had only two functional computers while the library had no books. This meant that the school lacked an adequately equipped computer lab and a library for additional lessons to the learners. There was also a physical science laboratory at the school which made it possible for the learners to have hands on experience of the science experiments. The school also had head teacher office and staff room which were on separate location to the classrooms meaning that they were planned for and not just improvised as was the case with other schools. There was a reliable water source at the school – standpipe on the premises (see figure below for a stand pipe and a computer lab).

The lack of the fence around the school also posed security problems to the school's inadequate facilities as well as disruptions of lessons by passers by. The school premises could not allow for further expansion because there was no additional space for the expansion. Any attempt to expand would indeed restrict space for relaxing during break and during assembly.
There were no play grounds at the school which meant that the learners did not have an opportunity to do some sports while at school. If they were to play either football or netball, they had to go to a nearby primary school, where they used that school's play grounds. Generally speaking, the school had most of the important facilities to the extent that the environment and conditions at the school were relatively conducive for learning purposes.

LEARNERS

Crack Private secondary School was heavily advertised on the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)Television as such within a very short space of time it was widely known by Blantyre residents and even beyond. However, there were still very few learners in all forms resulting in the school having only one stream of classes in all forms. All the leaners at the school were day scholars. The enrolment of learners at the school was better in the present year than the previous year though it was still not impressive. According to the head teacher, the school enrolled a total of 43 leaners in the previous year while in the present year enrolment had gone up to 64 learners. This indicated that the enrolment pattern at the school was increasing. Information on enrolment at the school is presented in Table below.

Learner Enrolment for 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years

Form	2011-2012			2012-2013		
	B	**G**	**T**	**B**	**G**	**T**
1	5	3	8	7	5	12
2	1	1	2	3	1	4
3	7	4	11	8	9	17
4	19	11	30	18	15	33
Total	**31**	**19**	**50**	**36**	**30**	**66**

As can be observed from the table above, there were more boy learners than girls at the school. There was no clear policy in as far as registration of learners was concerned. The head teacher said that since they were looking for money, access to the school was based on ability to pay fees. The school had a big catchment area which spread to Chilomoni and Machinjiri but most of the learners came from surrounding locations like; Chilobwe, Manja, Chimwankhunda and Naperi which are in the urban area of Blantyre. The school had only one learner with disabilities. The MK30, 000.00 per term as tuition fees was an indication that most of the learners were from well to do families. All learners were day scholars meaning that the school did not provide boarding facilities to the learners.

It was reported that learners at the school were attracted by a touching advert that was placed at the MBC television which described the school as one that was so beautiful and complete. Some of them were attracted by the high quality of teaching that prevailed at the school. One learner said that she had found out about the school because her aunt knew the Director of the school and that there was no restrictions whatsoever for learners to enroll. Since the school had just started the migration of learners at the school was very minimal. Only two boys had migrated into the school and no student had migrated out. This meant that the few learners at school liked the school. It could be that the school being new had relatively good and enough facilities and infrastructure compared to the other surrounding schools.

Learner drop out had not been an issue for the school. Only one student had dropped out. It is possible that since the school was new, learners had not yet seen the bad side of the school. The learners indicated that despite having a nice school and highly qualified teachers, there were several challenges that they were meeting as they pursued their studies. They mentioned the following as challenges; noise from the iron sheets as it rained because the classrooms had no

ceiling and these resulted in halting of classes. Some subjects were not taught at the school e.g. History, Home Economics and intergraded physics which other learners could have studied. Tuition fees were too high but the learners did not receive text books. This affected their studies in that the learners depended on the blackboard notes. They could not expand their knowledge at all without books. Learners also complained that some teachers were very harsh that they did not allow learners to ask for clarification when the teaching was not clear. Learners also complained about frequent of changing of teachers as well as unstable time table that changed any how without prior notice. The uniform was also said to be very expensive and students were also being punished on petty issues.

TEACHERS

The school had a total of nine teachers and out of these, eight were male. There were only five teachers who were qualified to teach in a secondary school while the rest were not qualified. The only lady teacher was among the qualified ones. Three teachers (one lady and two men) were on part time but the rest were on full time basis.

Number of qualified teachers and unqualified teachers at Crack Private Secondary School

Qualification	**Number of teachers**		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Qualified Teachers	4	1	5
Unqualified Teachers	4	0	4
Total number of teachers	**8**	**1**	**9**

The school had very youthful teachers with six of them aged between 31 and 35 years. The teachers received a monthly salary which ranged from MK30,000 to MK40,000 based on the qualification and whether a particular teacher was on part time or on full time basis. Those on part time were paid Mk30,000 per month while those on full time were in the range of MK35,000 to MK40,000 per month. These salaries were paid by cash which was collected from learners' fees but at times the owner used his own money to pay the salaries as the fees alone could not suffice. There are no non salary benefits that were given to the teachers due to insufficient funds to run the school. All the teachers were not on contracts. The school did not have adequate teachers as well as teaching materials and students said that this negatively impacted on the service delivery.

The school seemed not to have problems in acquiring teachers because there was a pool of applications that rocked the head teacher's office which they shortlisted and called for interviews. The interviews were both practical (on the chalkboard) and oral. Most of the teachers at the school were attracted to the school by the way the owner of the school ensured that teachers were paid every month. The teachers said that this was not the case with the surrounding schools where teachers went up to three months without getting paid. However, there was still high turnover of teachers at the school due to how salaries and lack of adequate teaching materials and non-salary benefits.

The head teacher said that one of the problems in private schools is that, teachers leave any time they would want if they found better jobs. But this seemed to be aggravated by the lack of contracts and performance related pay which could have motivated these teachers. Learners complained that this meant that they could go without a teacher for a long time while the school was looking for a replacement. The school did not have teachers' houses which meant that all the teachers stayed away from the school premises, making it even more difficult for the learners to make use of the teachers after school hours. At Crack Private secondary school, the teachers also faced a number of challenges when executing their duties including high work load as compared to the public schools, and lack of adequate teaching materials. The head teacher also noted that normally, directors of private schools were not, ready to invest. However, the teachers indicated that they had no problems in teaching mixed age groups. Each teacher taught one subject in each form except for one who had two subjects.

Performance

Learners indicated that the performance of the school in the previous year was very poor but there were expectations that in the current year the performance would change for the better. They were deriving this expectation from the high quality of teaching they were experiencing at the school as well as from reduction in changing of teachers. The performance of the school for 2011 / 2012 academic year has been presented below.

Performance at JCE and MSCE

Year	JCE			MSCE		
	Entered	Passed	**%**	Entered	Passed	**%**
2011/2012	1	1	**100**	21	9	**42**

The head teacher said that the last year's low pass rate had been a wakeup call to the learners, teachers and administrators of the school. All concerned realized that there was much that needed to be done in order to reverse the current situation in as far as the school performance was concerned. According to the learners, the school had responded to this low pass rate by improving some of the facilities at the school like maintaining teachers for quite a long time and ensuring that most of the learning materials were available.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

As already expressed in one of the sections above, the school was financed by the learners' fees and the Director's contributions. Each learner was paying MK30,000 as tuition fees per term. These fees were collected through cash on hand or at times through cheques. To ensure that each and every learner paid his or her fees, the school decided to give an option of paying up to three installments. Most of the learners had already paid their fees during the time of the visit. It was reported that 21learners had not yet finished paying their fees, total almost MK243, 000.00 in fees yet to be collected. The head teacher indicated that there were three categories of fees payment; some paid at once, some had their fees paid by companies while the rest paid when they were chased. The main expenditure that was incurred at the school was the teachers' salaries. At times the school did not manage to pay the teachers because most learners did not pay their tuition fees in time. The teachers' salaries ranged from Mk30, 000.00 to Mk40, 000.00

per teacher. It was reported that in cases of insufficient funds, the Director normally came in to bail out the school.

The school had a bank account which was used when making payments for school expenditures. However, the school's books were not audited at all. From the look of things and how the school is being managed, there is a balance of interests. While the owners were making profits, they should also consider investing into the school as one way of attracting learners to this newly established school.

ROCKY EDUCATION CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

Rocky education centre was located on a rocky site in BCA within Blantyre CITY. The school was run as a family business. It was established in 2001 and became registered with ISAMA later in the year 2008. The school was not an examination centre as such learners sat for their MANEB examinations at a nearby Community Day Secondary School. Most learners for the school came from urban areas of BCA, Namiyango, Bangwe, Chigumula and Nthandizi. However there were other learners from rural areas of Mondiwa, Chiswe and Bandawe. The furthest students came from Mzamba some 10 km away from the school. The School was an examination centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school was contained within two blocks of classrooms including a very tiny head master's office, a staff room and three other unfinished blocks which were intended to be used as a library, science laboratory and a recreation centre. However the blocks appeared untouched for a long period of time. It was obvious from the look of the buildings that the school management had struggled to finish the building for a long time.

The school had 6 toilets, 3 for boys and 3 for girls. The pictures below show the state of the toilets at the school.

As can be observed from the pictures, the toilets of this school were also in very bad condition. They had damaged doors and others had no doors at all. They had cracks and so paused security and health risk to the learners. Nevertheless the toilets for boys and girls were in separate locations.

The school had no library. The block that was meant to be used as a library was not completed. Since not all learners took all subjects that were being offered at the school, it meant that when it was time for a particular subject whom most learners did not take, instead of going to the library to study, learners went outside to play so as to pass time and wait for that period to end. Hence they made a lot of noise and distracted other learners who were in class in addition to wasting time idling.

During classes, students had no books. The teachers who were interviewed reported that the main problem at the school was lack of materials including textbooks. “We have to take our own initiatives and photocopy books from our friends”, one teacher observed. Teachers had to write notes on the board and students copied them in their notebooks.

Rocky Education Centre had no computer laboratory although it had electricity. The school therefore did not offer computer lessons. The school had only two computers and it was only teachers who had access to those two computers. One computer was in the secretary’s office and the other one was the head teacher’s personal laptop which was used for the school’s purposes. A block meant for science laboratories was also not completed but the school had equipment and chemicals (although not adequate) that were used in the classrooms during science practical.

The school had neither a recreation center nor a sports field of its own. Instead students used a near by playground that belonged to a government primary school. However, the ground was miles away from the school and students had to walk for a long distance to play their games. The school did not have enough of other sporting equipment like uniforms and balls for both girls and boys.

Not all learners of this school had desks. Most desks were broken but learners still sat on them. Sometimes a desk that was meant for two students was shared by three of them. Some learners especially the form ones sat on benches with no writing surface (see picture below).

The school had a stand pipe/tap as a source of water but learners did not access water direct from the tap. Instead, they have a bucket of water and a cup within the school where learners drank from. It was reported that this was done to cut bills of water because they believed that most learners misused water. However, the bucket of water was not there the day the school was visited.

LEARNERS

The head teacher complained that most private schools take weak students or residues of students after the ministry of education has selected the best students into various conventional secondary schools as well as Community Day secondary Schools. For learners to be admitted at the school they needed to have at least passes in Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations. This applied mainly to the form ones.

Enrolment

Enrolment in 2012/2013 academic year seemed to have dropped because this was the year that the school raised the fees from MK7,000 to K9,000. Many students dropped out because they could not afford to pay the fees while others had moved away because their parents got transferred. At the time of the research team's visit, the school enrolment was 207. The school reported that there was no student with any form of disability. Table below displays information about the enrolment of the school by form and sex.

Learner enrolment in the past five academic years (2008-2012)

Form	2008			2009			2010-2011			2011-2012			2012-2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	30	25	55	58	47	105	57	38	95	36	37	73	15	21	36
2	22	40	62	48	37	85	58	47	105	46	41	87	32	24	56
3	16	25	41	37	25	62	30	32	62	28	24	52	25	29	54
4	26	26	52	39	28	67	55	38	93	36	32	68	36	25	61
Total	94	106	210	182	137	319	200	155	355	146	134	280	108	99	207

It can be noted from the table that enrolment increased from a total of 210 in 2008 to 319 in 2009 to 355 in 2010/11. The enrolment then decreased in 2011/12 to 280 and then decreased further to 207 in 2012/13. As observed above, the increase in fee precipitated the exodus of students from the school. With the exception of 2008, there were consistently more boys than girls at the school. There were however slight variations in total number of boys and girls by form and year.

Table below displays information about the numbers of students dropping out of school has been presented.

Dropout in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic year

	2010/2011 Academic year			2011/2012 Academic year		
Form	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	6	3	9	3	4	7
2	3	4	7	7	5	12
3	4	2	6	2	3	5
4	2	1	3	2	1	3
Total	**15**	**10**	**25**	**14**	**13**	**27**

The information in the table shows that there was a slight increase in total number of students dropping out of the school between 2010/11 and 2011/12. Overall more boys than girls, dropped out of the school in the two years.

Data on migration of learners in and out of the school is presented in Table below.

Learner migration in 2011/2012 academic year

	Learners migrating in			Learners migrating out		
Form	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	2	4	6	2	1	3
2	1	2	3	4	6	10
3	2	3	5	3	2	5
4	3	2	5	2	3	5
Total	**8**	**11**	**19**	**11**	**12**	**23**

The above table clearly shows that there were more learners migrating out of the school than those migrating in. Overall, more girls than boys migrated in and out of the school.

Performance

Both learners and teachers indicated that performance of students from this school was average as compared to others from nearby schools. This was so due to lack of learning materials, poor learning conditions and unqualified teachers. The table below presents the information about the pass rates of the school.

	2010/2011academic year			2011/2012 academic year		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Number of learners who sat for JCE	-	-	98	-	-	89
Number of learners who passed JCE	25	36	61 (62%)	-	-	59 (66%)
Number of learners who sat for MSCE	-	-	85	30	44	74
Number of learners who passed MSCE	23	28	51 (60%)	-	-	47 (63.5%)
Number of learners Selected to UNIMA	-	1	1	-	-	-

The school struggled to produce the data on the pass rates. They obviously did not have organized record keeping system. They only had the total number that had entered the examinations but they had full information when it came to those who passed. It was therefore not possible to calculate the pass rate by sex. Overall pass rate however hovered around 60% for both JCE and MSCE.

TEACHERS

The school had 10 teachers and out of those teachers only one was female. Those teachers were holders of MSCE and Diplomas in various fields. The female teacher was a diploma holder in Journalism but she taught English and Life Skills in all forms. Four of the remaining nine male teachers had diplomas and the other five were MSCE holders. The school had no qualified teachers however the teachers had many years of teaching experience in their fields. For example, the female teacher who was interviewed indicated that while she was only three months at this school, she had taught for one year at another private school and for four years at yet another private school. The head teacher indicated that he had taught in various schools since 2001 before becoming the deputy teacher in 2004. He had been head of the school since 2007.

All teachers at the school worked on full time basis. Their salary or payments depended on the papers or certificates they possessed. For example, the starting salary for those having a diploma was K22, 500.00 while those with MSCE were receiving K21, 500.00. The salary was payable monthly in a form of cash from the fees collected from learners. The payments were done by the Director of the school. The school simply collected the fees through the secretary and the money was deposited into the Director's account. For every outstanding performance, especially results from MANEB, teachers got incentives. For example, for every distinction they were given a sum of K1000, credits attracted K900 and K800 depending on how strong the credit was. While on mere passes teachers get a sum of K500.

The table below shows the age ranges for the teachers by sex.

Age range	Male	Female	Total
Below 20	0	0	0
Between 20-25	1	0	1

Between 26-30	6	1	7
Between 31-35	1	0	1
Between 36-40	1	0	1
Between 41-45	0	0	0
Between 46-50	0	0	0
Above 50	0	0	0

It can be noted from the table that the teachers at the school were young with ages 40 or below. The majority of them were in the 26 to 30 age range.

Teachers reported that they were attracted to this school because they got paid for the whole year as compared to other schools where teachers did not get their payments when the schools were closed. Some of the teachers who were interviewed reported that they got attracted to the school because the salary was better. For example, the female teachers said that she was receiving K15, 000 at her previous school. When recruiting teachers, the right candidates were applying for the job, and then they were shortlisted and conducted interviews. They normally had oral interviews as well as practical interviews in class where they taught their two best subjects. When they are successful they are called to start work, but no contract is given.

The school did not have teachers houses so all teachers stayed away from the campus and this made it difficult for learners to come back to the teacher after school. However, the head teacher reported that they used to have good quality teachers but they left the school because they found better jobs. Other teachers left the school because there were no good relationships between teachers and learners.

The teachers at the school reported they were hard working, committed to their job although the school did not have enough learning materials. One teacher observed that:

> In private schools, teachers work hard because they are monitored by the Directors. These Directors are looking for good results so they make sure that we work hard for the success of their schools

FINANCIAL ISSUES

As reported above, the school was only financed by the learner's tuition fees. Learners were paying a sum of K9000.00 per term. In the previous academic years tuition fee was at K7000.00 but due to the rise in costs of living, the Director thought of raising fees by K2000.00. The school fees was payable per term and in cash or cheque. If learners could not afford to pay fees they were given a grace period of two weeks and if the grace period elapsed, the school called their parents. Some parents could remove their wards from the school if they see that they could not afford to pay the fee. The head teacher estimated that about 35% of learners had not finished paying their fees by the time of the visit.

IDEAL PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Ideal private secondary school is located within one of the densely populated areas of Chilomoni in the city of Blantyre. The owner of the school also owns the school site. He was trained as a nurse and then started teaching at St. Johns nursing School. He was solely the director and owner of Ideal private secondary school and was intending to open a primary school. Ideal private secondary school was established in the year 2002 but it was not yet registered with ISAMA. The owner revealed that he still remained a member of PRISAM although there were problems with its management. The school comprised of forms one to four in which there were three streams in form four, two streams in form two and one each in forms one and two. Most of the learners at the school came from urban settings in the locations of Chilomoni, Kanjedza, Namiwawa and Chirimba.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school had three blocks in which one block comprised of forms two and three classes, another block comprised of 3 form four streams and the last block comprised of a form one classroom, administration office, computer room and library. Although the school was well equipped in terms of infrastructure, learners complained that the classes were inadequate because there was high teacher to student ratio. One of the learners commented by saying that:

> One teacher is supposed to teach 40 students in a class that but at this school the ratio is more than that.

The learners also added that:

> Of course we do have the library, but there are no enough books, most of the books that are in the library are primary school books and cartoon books which are not of much help to the secondary school students.

The pictures below show the computer room, administration office, staff room and library.

At the time off the visit, the hall was under construction and school activities were being conducted on an open ground on campus. There was no science laboratory and the school had chemicals for experiments which were kept in a store room in the administration office. The school had electricity, computers (15 in number which were all functioning) and also reliable water source (stand pipes) on campus. The school did not have a playground; instead they used a near by primary school ground for sports activities.

In terms of toilets, the school had a total of fourteen toilet rooms in which 6 were for girls and 8 were for boys. The boys and girls toilets were on separate sides but they were in bad/poor and dirty condition. The pictures below show the toilets at Ideal private secondary school.

LEARNERS

Enrollment

In the academic year 2012-2013, the enrolment of the learners at Ideal private secondary school was at 483 with 226 boys and 257 girls. The head teacher and the learners commented that the enrolment number at this school was quite good and the head teacher pointed out that the school was self-advertising due to the impressive results of JCE and MSCE. The admission process in the school started with a registration form which was given to the new students at a fee of K1,000. The form contained rules and regulations of the school. The form was signed by the learners and with the consent from their parents and guardians. In addition, new students were also asked to pay K500 for IDs to be used whenever they need to access the library services. Orientation was done at the school so that the new students are made familiar with the school premises and other activities done at the school. The learners commented that they were attracted to this school due to the good performance and high passing rates, high quality education due to the hardworking spirit of the teachers, well behaved students since the school administration ensures that the school rules and regulations are abided by. Another reason they gave for liking the school was that Ideal private school was the only best school which was doing well in the area. It was reported that most of these learners come from middle economic backgrounds.

Migration

Information about learner migration is presented in Table below:

Learner migration in 2011/2012 academic year

Form	Learners migrating in			Learners migrating out		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	7	4	11	14	5	19
2	13	10	23	12	11	23
3	18	41	59	19	6	25
4	28	30	51	5	21	26
Total	59	85	144	50	43	93

The information in the table shows that in the academic year 2011/2012, a total of 144 students migrated in and 93 left. Thus, learners who joined the school outnumbered those who quitted this school to go to other schools. This is because the requirements for entry into the school only need a pass in standard 8 and since many pupils pass but only a few are selected to the public secondary schools, there are always many pupils wanting to enroll at the school. Some of the learners, who left did so due to transfers of their parents to other districts. It is also possible that other learners left the school due to the fee hike since they could no longer afford to pay the fees.

Performance

In Table below, information about the performance of the students at Ideal private secondary school has been presented.

Learners' performance in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 academic years

	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Number of who enrolled (sat) for JCE	42	36	78	51	42	93
Number of learners who passed JCE	41	33	74	51	40	91
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for MSCE	84	71	155	100	102	202
Numbers of learners who passed MSCE	59	46	105	83	70	153
Number of learners selected to university (UNIMA)	3	1	4	1	4	5

The records showed that the performance of the learners at the school was good. Learners commented that this was due to the hardworking teachers that they had and also their own hardworking. The students also attributed the success to the compulsory prep time from 3:30-4:30 during the week days for all students and to the weekend classes for forms 2 and 4.

TEACHERS

There were a total of 14 teachers at Ideal private secondary school and all of them were permanent. Information about the teachers is presented in Table below.

Number of teachers at the school

Qualification	Number of Teachers		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Degree	6	2	8
Diploma	4	1	5
MSCE	0	1	1
JCE	0	0	0
Total number of Teachers	10	4	14

The information in the table shows that there were 8 teachers who were degree holders, 5 diploma holders and 1 had MSCE. But learners claimed that these teachers were not adequate since one teacher was teaching more than 2 subjects. In addition, there was a head teacher who was also the director and owner of this school, 4 guards, 2 cleaners and 1 secretary. Out t of the 14 teachers, 13 of them are qualified. This information is presented in Table below.

Table: 4 Number of qualified and unqualified teachers at the school.

Qualification	Number of teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
Qualified teachers	10	3	13
Unqualified teachers	0	1	1
Total number of teachers	10	4	14

Out of the fourteen teachers, 2 teachers are of the age ranges 26-30, 9 are of the age ranges 31-35, and 3 are of the age ranges 36-40. The table below illustrates this.

Age ranges of the teachers

Age Range	Number of teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
Below 20	0	0	0
Between 20-25	0	0	0
Between 26-30	1	1	2
Between 31-35	7	2	9
Between 36-40	2	1	3
Between 41-45	0	0	0
Between 46-50	0	0	0
Above 50	0	0	0

The teachers apply to the school and they are invited for interviews in which they do both oral and written interviews. When they are picked to start work, they are entitled to probation period of 6 months. During the 2012/13, 3 teachers were recruited. It was reported that, the teachers were attracted to this school because of the high salaries offered compared to other schools.

The salaries for the teachers depended on their qualification. Degree holders were paid a starting salary of MK65,000 and diploma holders had a starting salary of MK50,000. These teachers were paid on monthly basis both in cash and cheque. All the funds were from school fees.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school depends on the school fees to make payments to its workers. The tuition fees at this school were K17,500 per term and the school uniform was at MK10,000. The Director reported that learners from not well to do families, were given enough space or grace period so that they could afford to pay the school fees in instalments. There were no subsidies, grants or scholarships for poor children. The school fees were paid termly whether in cash or cheque. Those who could not afford to pay the fees as per agreement were sent back home, until they get the fees. Some stopped schooling in the academic year because of non-payment of school fees.

Curriculum

The school had a master timetable for lessons which was posted in the administration office to be followed. And in each class there was also a timetable so that every teacher and learner should be aware of which subjects are to be taught in that particular period.

When asked of the differences between public and private secondary schools, the following were given:

1. Private school teachers are punctual and serious (hardworking and committed) unlike public school teachers who are always relaxed
2. Private school students learn more subjects in a day than public school students
3. Public school teachers are well qualified in teaching than private school teachers
4. Public schools students are well behaved (disciplined) than private school students
5. Performance is high in private schools due to compulsory preps and weekend classes

DAMBO PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Dambo was located within the town of Dedza, about 2 kilometers from the heart of Dedza town. It was a day Private secondary school though others were on self-boarding basis. The school had forms one to four. Boarders were mainly from distant areas; some 20 km away. All classes had one stream and they were in one block. The school was established in 2008 and is owned by Youth Foundation Trust. Most of the learners at this school came from rural settings of Chimbiya, Zengereza, Bembeke, Kanyama, and Chiphazi. Very few came from urban settings. And most of these learners were from poor economic backgrounds of the school according to the management.

At the time of the visit, DAMBO was not a member of Independent Schools Association of Malawi (ISAMA) and it was not an examination centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE

As stated above, there was only a single building at the school, accommodating all the four classes. Form 4 was located in a room that was meant to be a multipurpose hall and whenever there were school recreation activities it was used as such. The other rooms in this building were head teacher's office and a staffroom which also had a library inside .The classrooms were not in good condition with cracks on the walls, leaked roofs and poor condition windows. The school did not have electricity and, learners especially self-boarders complained that this was affecting their performance in the sense that sometimes they did not have money to buy candles to provide them light during study time. The school did have reliable water of source. There were also no laboratory, computer room, as well as playground. In addition to that, the toilets were in very bad conditions. They were very dirty. There were four in number, two for boys and two for girls. In the classrooms, learners did not have access to a writing surface but rather a seat only. The picture below demonstrates this:

LEARNERS

The head teacher said that enrolment was not that good because there was high competition among private schools in the district. He said that despite this, the school was still able to attract learners at the beginning of every new term. Information on the number of students since 2008 for the school has been presented in Table below.

Learner Enrolment for the past 5 years (2008-2012)

Form	2008			2009			2010 -2011			2011 – 2012			2012 -2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	20	15	35	26	18	44	31	20	51	22	16	38	24	14	38
2	18	16	34	20	17	37	31	20	51	18	17	35	23	17	40
3	12	06	18	16	12	28	19	14	33	20	16	36	08	14	22
4	08	07	15	10	11	21	10	07	17	13	08	21	14	19	33
Total	58	44	102	72	58	130	91	61	152	73	57	130	69	64	133

It can be noted from the table that a total of 133 students (69 boys and 64 girls) were enrolled in the 2012/13 academic year. The major requirement to be enrolled at Dambo was to have a pass in Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education. Out of the total 133 students at the school, 24 boys and 22 girls were boarders and 62 boys and 25 girls were day scholars. There were 2 students who had sight problem and another with protruding back. Information about the number dropouts at the school has been presented in Table below:

Learner drop out in 2010/11 and 2011/12 Academic Years

Form	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
1	05	06	11	07	09	16
2	03	05	08	08	09	17
3	01	03	04	02	03	05
4	03	04	07	04	04	08
Total	12	18	30	21	25	46

The information in the table shows that in the academic year 2010/11, a total of 30 learners dropped out of school and in 2011/12, a total of 46 dropped out of school. This indicates that almost 30-34% of pupils drop out of school every year. Information about students' migration was also collected. This information has been presented in table below.

Learners Migration in 2011 – 2012 Academic Year

Form	Learners Migrating In			Learners Migrating Out		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	06	08	14	02	04	06
2	02	04	06	03	06	09
3	02	03	05	02	03	05
4	01	02	03	03	04	07
Total	11	17	28	10	17	27

The information in the table shows that the number of learners who joined the school exceeded the number of those going out of the school. For instance, in 2011/2012 academic year, 130 of the learners joined the school while only 30 of the learners left the school. This meant that there was an excess of 100 learners who joined the school that academic year. Students said that the reasons behind all this excess in migration was that learners were impressed with high quality of education at the school and affordable school fees which was at K7, 500 per term.

Performance

The performance of the learners at the school was average. For instance, in the 2011/2012 Academic Year, JCE pass rate was 62% and MSCE pass rate 52%. Information about the performance of the school for the two years has been presented in Table below.

Learners Performance in 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Academic Year

	2010-2011			2011-2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for JCE	20	31	51	17	18	35
Number of learners who passed JCE	14	18	32	14	13	27
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for MSCE	07	10	17	08	13	21
Numbers of learners who passed MSCE	04	05	09	02	07	09
Number of learners selected to university (UNIMA)	00	00	00	00	00	00

TEACHERS

There were a total of 9 teachers at Dambo School. All of the 9 teachers were male. There were 2 degree holders, 2 diploma holders and the rest were MSCE holders. And out of those 9 teachers 7 were permanent teachers and 2 were part time teachers.

The age ranges of these teachers were between 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 41-45, 46-50 and above 50. Table below illustrates this.

Age range of the teachers

Age Range	Number of teachers		
	Male	Female	Total
Below 20	0	0	0
Between 20-25	0	0	0
Between 26-30	1	0	1
Between 31-35	3	0	3
Between 36-40	2	0	2
Between 41-45	1	0	1
Between 46-50	1	0	1
Above 50	1	0	1

It was reported that the salary scale of the teachers was almost the same, regardless of qualifications that the teachers possessed. Thus, teachers with a degree, diploma and MSCE all received the same salary of MK14, 000.00.

The teachers are paid on monthly basis from the funds collected from the school fees. They were paid cash. The school did not provide non salary benefits to the teachers.

Recruitment

The head teachers reported that there was no problem with recruitment of teachers at this school. The only thing they looked at was having a certificate in any field. The head teacher commented that nothing attracts the teachers at this school except that they only need to be employed. In the 2012/13 academic year, the school had recruited 3 teachers. And two teachers left the school in the same year, one was old and the other one got another job.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The tuition fee was MK7, 500.00 per learner per term. New learners also paid MK200 as a registration fee. The fees were collected in cash. The tuition fees could be paid in two installments. There were 3 students at this school who were not paying the fees because they were poor and the foundation paid for them. If the learners were not paying the school fees, they were given 2weeks grace period, and if still they still did not pay in the two weeks, they were sent back home. The school had a bank account but this account was not audited. When asked about the differences between public schools and private schools, teachers and learners pointed out the following:

1. There are qualified and adequate teachers in public schools than in private schools.
2. There are adequate learning materials in public schools than in private schools
3. Public schools students are disciplined than private school students.
4. Private schools learn more subjects and understanding is easy, since they are very few than public schools which are overcrowded.
5. There is freedom of expression among the learners in private schools than in public schools.
6. Security is not inadequate in most of the private schools, since they do not have fences and guards.

MZUNGU PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Mzungu Private Secondary School was a day secondary school located within Zomba urban. It was founded in 2009. It was owned by a private businessman who was also a lecturer in Economics at the University of Malawi. He also owned a business college. The school was registered with ISAMA in 2010. The school had a bank account, but its accounts were not audited. It sounded like this account was a personal one to the director of the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The school was contained within a single one storey block of classrooms. The block had four classrooms, a head teacher's office, a reception and a small staff room. The block was built of concrete and was roofed with a corrugated iron sheets. The front and sides of the building were painted but the back had been left unpainted. At the front of the block was a veranda which acted as a corridor, classes entered onto the veranda and had large windows at the front, with bars in them but no glass. At the back of the classrooms were small holes in ventilation bricks to allow some light and air into the classrooms.

The school had no electricity, no library, or laboratory. Water was available at the school in form of a standpipe on campus. The school had two toilet blocks, one for staff and one for students. Toilets for boys and girls were housed in the same block. They were rudimentary holes in the ground, which gave very little privacy or sanitation.

The classrooms were large and high as they extended all the way up to the corrugated iron roof with no internal ceiling. They were fairly dark due to lack of natural light and total absence of electricity and electric lighting in the school. Most of the classrooms were totally bare without any decoration or instructional materials on the walls. In two classrooms, there were posters produced by teachers illustrating scientific principles. The posters seemed to be old, and the classrooms obviously had not been decorated for some time. In the corner of some classrooms, broken chairs and desks were piled up.

Students sat on plastic chairs and worked on small low quality soft wood desks. The number of chairs and desks appeared to be adequate for the number of learners in a class. The school faced a small grass field, which was in the process of being cut as we visited the school. It was waterlogged and obviously not suitable for use for sports at the moment and had no obvious facilities for sport or other extracurricular activities. The head teacher reported that the school used a community ground nearby for sports. There was no wall surrounding the school, so it was difficult to assess how large the school site was. Students complained about drunkard passers-by who made noise and disturbed classes.

LEARNERS

Teachers and head teachers complained that they normally recruit low performing students who had not been selected to good government schools. The head teacher said that they had to work very hard to get the students up to the level of other students. The school did not have admissions criteria and accepted students as they come from other schools.

The head teacher said that enrolments were increasing as the school had a good reputation due to the quality of the teaching and the fact that one of their students went to Chancellor College the previous year. The majority of the students came from nearby, very few came from far. They were urban families with parents who were working in Zomba. The school had one student who was visually impaired.

There were currently 149 learners in the school's four forms. Each form had one stream. In the last three years there had consistently been more girls than boys enrolled in the school (see Table below).

Learner enrolment from 2009 – 2012/2013 academic year

Form	2009			2010 - 2011			2011 - 2012			2012 - 2013		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
1	10	7	17	20	18	38	20	24	44	21	22	43
2	3	14	17	12	15	27	15	19	34	14	16	30
3	20	12	32	14	20	34	18	20	38	21	22	43
4	3	2	5	13	23	36	23	26	49	13	20	33
Total	36	35	71	59	76	135	76	88	164	69	80	149

In the 2010/11 academic year, a total of 15 learners dropped out of the school (out of 135 students). In 2011/12 the number was 21 out of 164; this indicates that more than 10% of the school's learners left the school each year.

Learner dropout

Form	2010/2011 Academic year			2011/2012 Academic year		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	2	8	10	3	5	8
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	2	5	8	2	10
4	2	1	0	1	2	3
Total	7	11	15	12	9	21

Students from the school also left the school to transfer to other schools, and the school attracted learners from other schools who joined in the middle of the school year. In 2011/12, 14 learners left the school in the middle of the year, but 41 joined, meaning a net gain of 27 learners during the year.

Learner migration in 2011/12 academic year

Form	Learners migrating in			Learners migrating out		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	15	12	27	2	1	3
2	2	3	5	3	2	5
3	3	4	7	1	2	12
4	0	2	2	2	1	3
Total	20	21	41	8	6	14

The head teacher said that one of the challenges for the school was migration of students; especially in Form one.

Performance

The pass rate in the JCE exam for the last academic year was 91% and for the MSCE level it was 69%. Boys consistently had a higher pass rate than girls in both exams over the last two years.

	2010/2011			2011/2012		
	Girls	**Boys**	**Total**	**Girls**	**Boys**	**Total**
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for JCE	16	18	34	13	20	33
Number of learners who passed JCE	13	15	28	11	19	30
Percentage pass rate	**81**	**83**	**82**	**85**	**95**	**91**
Number of learners who enrolled (sat) for MSCE	28	33	61	28	33	61
Number of learners who passed MSCE	15	25	40	18	24	42
Percentage pass rate	**54**	**76**	**67**	**64**	**73**	**69**

Number of learners selected to University (UNIMA)	0	2	2	0	0	0

TEACHERS

There were 16 teachers at the school out of which 4 worked full time. The other 12 were part time teachers who worked in local government schools. These part time teachers were paid by the hour. One part time teacher reported teaching 10 lessons per week in the school on top of her work in a local CDSS school (14 lessons per week). The school paid these part time teachers MK 770 per hour for this work.

Of the 16 teachers, all were qualified teachers and 12 were men and 4 were women. Thirteen were educated to degree level and 3 to diploma level. Two of the teachers were new, having joined in the academic year, while two left at the end of the previous academic year. Teachers submitted their CVs to the school, meaning that for recruitment, the school simply selected teachers from the pool of CVs that they had. One of the full time teachers reported that he lived close to the school and could walk to school in the morning. He had a Diploma in Education from the University of Malawi as well as qualifications in Agriculture and Accountancy. He had worked as a teacher for 3 years, always in the same school.

A part time teacher said that she lived quite a long distance and had to travel for 30-40 minutes every morning to come to the school from the CDSS where she worked. She said that she did not find much difference between the private and public sectors as the private schools had adopted the same systems, syllabus and took the same exams as the public schools. She said that conventional secondary school students were selected on merit so they were often brighter and better behaved than the private school students where behaviour was a problem. Some students in private schools were those who had been expelled from government schools

Teachers were paid between MK30,000 to MK65,000 depending on their level of qualification and experience. Teachers at the school did not get a pension, leave grant or housing allowance. Teachers rented accommodation privately. The teachers were employed on 1 year rolling contracts, so if their students performed well, they got their contracts renewed. One teacher was removed in the previous year on the grounds of poor performance. The teachers reported that salaries in the government sector were better but they were often paid late, whereas in this school salaries are paid on time. This was also confirmed by the head teacher.

After the exam results teachers were sometimes given a small incentive if results were good. Teachers were assessed based on the number of passes and distinctions that their students got in the MSCE exams. These totalled between MK3000 to MK5000 Part time teachers did not get these incentives. The teachers reported that despite wide age ranges in their classes (between 13 and 21 in Form 1) they did not find any problems teaching them.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

The school was entirely financed by fees receiving no subsidy or grant from any source. Fees were 14,000 per term. Learners also contributed MK 500 per year towards the school's PTA fund for school developments. Learners had also to buy a school uniform for MK.2,300. Fees were paid

either by cash or cheque. They were usually paid in instalments of no less than 7000 at a time (indicating two instalments per term) with the second instalment coming one month after the start of term. If learners cannot pay they are sent home. At the time of the data collection exercise, about 50 of the 149 learners had not finished paying their fees so the school was starting to chase them. None had dropped out yet in the year due to non-payment of fees.

LOCATION PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

Location Private Secondary School was located about 5.5km away from the heart of Zomba City along Zomba – Liwonde main road. It was built on a very small plot of land within a densely populated area where one could not easily isolate from other peoples' dwelling houses. Most of the learners at the school came from areas within the school premises, very few came from far and these did self-boarding at the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There were four classrooms that accommodated forms one to four however the iron sheets were in bad state such that they leaked when it rained and this disrupted lessons. The walls seemed to have been painted long time ago which made them look untidy.

There were very few desks in the classrooms that meant not every learner had access to a seat and a table to write on. This makes it very difficult for the students to concentrate on the lessons because they lack comfort ability as they learn. Some students sat on the floor especially when all learners had reported for classes.

The school had six pit latrines, three for boys and the other three for girls. They were on the same location and under one roof, they were only separated by a wall. Despite the fact that they were on the same location, the toilets did not have doors which meant the privacy which is expected when nature calls was not guaranteed (see figure below).

Further the toilets seemed not well looked after as there was very wet floors resulting from undirected urine.

The school had two other rooms that were meant for computer lab and library but the rooms were not equipped with the computers and the books respectively rather they were being used for tobacco storage (see picture below)

There was also no physical science laboratory at the school which made it impossible for the learners to have hands on experience of science experiments. There was a reliable water source at the school in form of standpipe on the premises. However they had a problem with the neighbours that usually come to draw the water. All this was happening because the school did not have a fence around. The lack of the fence also posed security problem to the school's inadequate facilities as well as disruptions of lessons by passers-by. In addition to that, the intruders also used the toilets irresponsibly making them look untidy. At present the school premises could not allow further expansion because the place was congested with other peoples' houses that surrounded the school. But also any attempt to expand would indeed restrict space for relaxing during break and during assembly.

There were no playgrounds at the school which meant that the learners did not have an opportunity to do some sports while at school. If they were to play either football or netball they went to a nearby school, where they used that school's play grounds. However, there was a creation hall which they used as a studying room.

LEARNERS

Location Private secondary School was not that popular though it was one of the oldest private secondary schools in the city. Most of the learners at the school said they were attracted to the school because of the relatively low fees that they are asked to pay per term which was MK6000.00. There was a high turnover of learners at the school with a larger of them migrating out of the school due to lack of adequate learning materials, low pass rates and lack of adequate infrastructure at the school.

The school enrolled very few learners in the current academic year as compared to the previous three years and pattern kept on decreasing (see table below).

FORM	2010-2011			2011-2012			2012-2013		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	35	30	65	30	23	53	17	17	34
2	40	26	66	35	20	55	18	33	51
3	20	16	36	19	15	34	18	18	36
4	20	10	30	10	8	18	19	18	37
Total	**115**	**82**	**197**	**94**	**66**	**160**	**72**	**86**	**158**

The decrease in enrolment was attributed to poor performance that the school had experienced in the previous years. This was further attributed to the tendency of the school of employing unqualified teachers, who could not deliver as required. Location Private secondary school has no policy whatsoever in as far as learners' enrolment was concerned. Those who were able to pay the school fees were eligible to be enrolled by the school.

Learner dropout

The learner dropout appeared to have improved in the past two years at the school. In 2010/2011 there were a total of thirty learners who dropped out of school while in 2011/2012 school session there were only nineteen learners who dropped out of school (refer to table below)

Learner drop out

Form	2010/2011 Academic Year			2011/2012 Academic Year		
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
1	4	3	7	2	1	**3**
2	2	7	9	3	4	**7**
3	5	3	8	3	1	**4**
4	3	3	6	2	3	**5**
Total	**14**	**16**	**30**	**10**	**9**	**19**

Performance

Both learners and teachers, including the Head Teacher, concurred that the learner performance had not been very good for the past two years, that is, at both JCE an MSCE and this is illustrated in the table below.

Performance at JCE and MSCE

Year	JCE			MSCE		
	Entered	Passed	**%**	Entered	Passed	**%**
2010/2011	43	35	**81**	29	12	**41**
2011/2012	25	12	**48**	34	24	**70**

This is the backdrop of poor teaching, engagement of unqualified teachers, poor learning conditions and environment at the school. Maybe the lack of motivation on the part of the teachers could be among the attributes attached to this non-performance. The low pass rate is the wake up call to the learners, teachers and administrators of the school that there is much that need to be done in order to reverse the current situation in as far as the school performance was concerned.

TEACHERS

The school had seven teachers and out of this six were male while one was female. Only two teachers were qualified to teach in a secondary school while the rest were not qualified as they only hold a Malawi Schools Certificate of Education (MSCE) as their highest qualification. All the seven teachers were on full time basis. The teachers received a monthly salary which ranged from MK14, 000 to MK16, 000 based on the qualification the teacher. Those with degrees and diplomas enjoyed higher salaries than those who just held MSCE. The salaries were paid by cash sourced from learners' fees. There were no non-salary benefits given to the teachers due to insufficient funds to run the school.

The school seemed not to have difficulties in recruiting teachers because there was a pool of applications that rocked the head teacher's office. The teachers were not employed on contract basis. Turnover of teachers at the school was high due to low salaries, lack of adequate teaching materials and non-salary benefits. The school did not have teacher houses which mean that all the teachers stayed away from the school premises, making it even more difficult for the learners to make use of the teachers after school hours. The teachers faced a number of challenges when executing their duties like such as inconsistency payment of salaries such that in some cases the salaries were paid in bits and there were always balances that crossed over to the next month. This contributed to their de-motivation to discharge their duties diligently.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

As already expressed, the school was solely financed by the learners' fees that were pegged at MK 6000 per term. The fees were collected through cash or through cheques at times. To ensure that each and every learner had paid his or her fees the school decided to give an option of paying in two instalments. However, most of the learners still found it difficult to finish paying their fees by the time the term closes. The main expenditure that was incurred at the school was the teachers' salaries. At times the school did not even manage to pay the teachers because most

learners did not pay their tuition fees in time. The teachers' salaries ranged from MK14,000 to MK16,000 per teacher per month.

Therefore, with a total of 158 learners that have been enrolled this year each paying MK6000 for tuition, the school expects to collect MK 2,844,000 in a year. On average each teacher is paid Mk15,000, therefore, with seven teachers this comes to MK1,260,000. If this expenditure is taken away from the total revenue then the school nets MK1,800,000. However, other expenses went towards salaries for support staff, administration and bills. The school did not have a bank account as such it used the one held by the director of the school which was not audited at all.