

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the text of this thesis entitled: EXPLORING THE INTEGRATION OF LEARNERS FROM COMPLEMENTARY BASIC EDUCATION INTO FORMAL SCHOOLING IN MALAWI: A CASE OF CHIKHWAWA DISTRICT, is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Every effort has been made to acknowledge where other peoples' work has been used. In case of oversights where other peoples' work used in this text have not been acknowledged that has not been deliberately done.

DINAH KATONDA

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis presents the student's own work effort and has been submitted with our approval.

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DEDICATION

To my mother, husband and children: Ronald, Brenda, Wendy and Kondwani.

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ABSTRACT

As a way of addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth, the Malawi Government in conjunction with a German Funding Agent, GTZ, has designed and is implementing an accelerated learning programme known as Complementary Basic Education (CBE). The programme allows out-of-school children and youth to attain a basic education equivalent to completion of Standard 5 of formal primary school. Learners who complete the CBE programme have sufficient literacy, numeracy and other basic skills to return to formal primary school at Standard 6. Studies done so far, concentrated on evaluating the effectiveness of CBE during its pilot phase which started as a project from 2006 to 2008 and the experiences of learners as they went through the CBE course during the pilot period. No known study had focussed on the experiences of the graduates from CBE who rejoined formal primary schools after completing the pilot phase.

Using phenomenology and concurrent-mixed as its methodology and design respectively, this study aimed at exploring the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE who were being integrated into primary schools in Chikhwawa District. The findings have been explained using a theoretical framework based on Tinto's (1975, 1993) theory of student retention and departure. In general, the study has shown that learners from CBE integrated well academically as a result of good background in literacy and numeracy skills that interacted well with primary school academic experiences such as use of library. However, the study has also established that some social experiences in primary schools facilitated while others acted against successful integration of learners from CBE schools into formal schooling in Chikhwawa District.

The main argument of this study is that while in some cases a mismatch between previous experiences of learners at CBE schools and academic and social experiences in primary schools disturbed their successful integration into primary schools in Chikhwawa District, in other instances a mismatch acted as an attraction to those graduates and enhanced their integration. This is a slight expansion to Tinto's theory which sees a mismatch as having negative impact and a match as having positive impact on integration of students in their new institution of learning.

One of the recommendations emanating from the study findings is that there should be a deliberate policy initiative by government or policy-makers to adopt some best teaching practices employed by facilitators in the CBE schools that make learners to acquire literacy and numeracy skills more easily. This will give chance to teachers in primary schools to improve their teaching practices.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCESS	Appropriate, Cost-effective Centres for Education within the School System
ADEA	African Development and Education Agency
AEP	Agriculture Extension Program
AGLIT	Adolescent Girls Literacy and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BEPs	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committees Education Programs
BPSs	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committees Primary Schools
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committees
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
COBET	Complementary Basic Education and Training
COPE	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
DWO	Dalit Welfare Organisation
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management and Information system
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
FAL	Functional Adult literacy
FAO	Food Agency Organization
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FLE	Family Life Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoESC	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
M4NH	Move 4 New Horizons
NALP	National Adult Literacy Program
NESP	Nation Education Sector Plan
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFPE	Non- Formal Primary Education
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
SAD	Swiss Academy for Development
SDIG	Skill Development and Income Generation Project
SFL	School for Life
SPARK	Skills, Participation and Access to Relevant Knowledge
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nation Education and Scientific Cooperation
UNFPA	United Nations Food and Population Agency
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTL	Ukani Traditional Literacy Classes

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter has introduces the study on exploration of experiences of learners who re-joined formal primary schools from complementary basic education (CBE) schools in Chikhwawa district. It starts by giving a brief background of CBE programme in Malawi, followed by statement of the problem, purpose of the study, key research questions, significance of the study, and definition of terms used in the study. Its main claim is that the study was necessary to fill the gap in literature on the experiences of learners from CBE during their integration in formal primary school.

1.2 Background to the study

Globally, high dropout of school children and youth remains a challenge to many governments. In 2006, it was observed that after the Jomtien Declaration of Education for All (EFA) in 1990, between 77 million and 115 million children remained out of school worldwide (Moore, 2006). For instance, in Pakistan, 8 million children between ages 8 and 9 were reported to have never attended school at all (Destefano Hartwell, Moore, & Benbow , 2006). However, in Honduras, like in most of the Latin America, where universal access to primary schooling is almost realised, there is still a problem of high rates of drop out before children complete their basic education cycle (Destefano et al, 2006).

Chimombo (2005, p. 129), asserts that in Africa there are many children and youth who do not have a chance to go to school, despite considerable progress that has been made in education after independence throughout the developing countries. He further states that there are far too few children who complete a bare minimum of schooling, become permanently literate and numerate. For instance, Chimombo (2005, p. 129) asserts that, by the year 2000,

EFA Report indicated that 104 million children of primary school-age were not enrolled in school and that the majority of these were in Africa.

In an effort to get more children into school, most governments in Africa introduced free universal basic education policy around the early and late 1990s. Malawi adopted this policy in 1994. With this policy in place, parents were expected to bear limited expenses over their children and no child was to be turned away from school for non-payment of school fees and school uniform (Ministry of Education Science and Culture, (MoESC), 1999). Despite this policy initiative, there has been minimal impact on access to basic education as the number of out-of-school children and youth is still increasing. For example, as of 2003, although Ghana's school enrolment rates were high compared to other African countries, there was a persistent rate of 40 per cent of children between 6 and 11 years of age who remained out of school (UNICEF, 2007, p. 3).

In Malawi the problem is equally serious, because by the year 2009, despite the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994, it was estimated that there were still about 600,000 children of primary school-going age not enrolled in primary schools (MoEST, 2009). This situation has negative effects on both individuals and societies. For example, Catterall (1985) and Levin (1972) assert that out-of-school children and youth or dropouts tend to have lower-paying jobs, lower employment rates and generally lower standards of living. Furthermore, dropping out from school leads to social costs in the form of increased crime rates, increased dispensation of welfare and unemployment subsidies, increased health care costs and lowered tax revenues for the state (Catterall, 1985; Levin, 1972).

Studies show that in view of the increasing number of out-of-school children and youth worldwide, entirely different approaches to governance, management and accountability are required if quality basic education is to be made universally available (World Bank, 2003;

Townshend-Coles, 1994). In the wake of this realisation, efforts have been made to approach these issues in a way that should solve the problems. Studies done in the past 20 years have shown that there have been a number of revolutions which have radically transformed forms of schooling in the developing world (Farrell, 2001).

Complementary Basic Education (CBE) is one such intervention being encouraged that aims at providing a chance to pupils who dropped out-of-school to re-enter into the education system. CBE falls under Non-Formal Education (NFE) and it also has an integrative component of its graduates into formal primary schools. However, Ruto (2004) asserts that, NFE schools appear to be haphazard as they are neither graded nor standardised and that the teachers are viewed as second-rate probably due to their lack of academic and/or professional credentials. In addition, their mode of operation, quality of teaching, subject content and assessment criteria are as diverse as the organisations providing the services (Aduda, 1998, p. 15). Hoppers (2007) also raised the same concern that not all complementary education programmes are successful and that even among those that achieve success not all such schools are uniform in quality. He further claims that “hard” data on the actual operations and process in NFE programmes and on the value of specific approaches and strategies and their outcomes is very scarce.

The assertions above raise questions on how competent learners who graduate from these programmes are, in terms of academic and social attributes that would ensure their successful integration into formal schooling once they rejoin primary schools. CBE programme was introduced in Malawi in 2006. Thus, this study endeavoured to explore CBE learners’ academic and social experiences during their integration into formal schooling in Chikhwawa district which is one of the districts that pioneered the implementation of CBE Programme in Malawi.

1.3 Background of complementary basic education in Malawi

Malawi adopted the CBE programme which was piloted in three districts namely, Chikhwawa, Lilongwe Rural and Ntchisi, from 2006 to 2008. The Malawi Government in conjunction with the German Funding Agency, GTZ, established CBE, with the goal of providing a chance of basic education to out-of-school children and youth ((MoEST, 2005; Moleni, Nampota & Kadzamira 2005). The programme came up in response to the problem of an increasing number of out-of-school children and youth. CBE programme which buds off from the new Basic Education policy is the type of education provision that is not systematically organized by following strict calendars, as is the case with formal education (Moleni et. al., 2005 & MoEST, 2008). Complementary basic education targets out-of-school children and youth between the ages of 9 and 17 and are expected to undertake a three-year CBE course. Studies show that that children of the younger age group between 9 and 13 years have a greater tendency to return to school than the older ones (Nampota, 2009; Malcolm, 2009; MoEST, 2008, p. 17).

The CBE programme helps learners to develop knowledge, skills, and values similar to those offered in formal primary schools. This is why those learners who complete CBE and are of the school-going age are encouraged to join formal primary school. In general, CBE seeks to equip out-of-school children and youth with knowledge, skills, and values so as to promote their self-reliance, lifelong learning and full participation in social development (MoEST, 2009; Nampota, 2009; Malcolm, 2009).

The CBE programme stipulates that learners should spend three years at CBE schools and then graduate (MoEST, 2005; Moleni et al., 2005). It also provides for three outputs for the graduates (learners who complete CBE). The first output is vocational training for those learners who complete CBE but are above the primary school-going age. The second output

is for the graduates above the primary school-going age to engage in normal livelihoods in society using the knowledge, skills, and values learnt under the CBE schools. The third output of CBE is to let its graduates who are of the school going age rejoin primary school in Standard 6 and continue with formal schooling, (MoEST, 2005; Moleni et al, 2005).

It must be noted that CBE learners are expected to be at par with standard 5 learners at their completion of the third year of learning. The programme prepares its graduates to have sufficient literacy, numeracy and other basic skills equivalent to regular learners in Standard 5 in formal primary schools. Thus, upon completion of a three-year cycle at CBE School, a learner can re-join primary school at Standard 6. It is therefore, the expectation is that the work covered in CBE schools is equivalent to work covered from Standards 1 to 5 in formal primary school. Hence, their eligibility to join Standard 6 is three years ahead of the number of years spent in primary school.

The CBE pilot phase ended in 2008 and some graduates are being integrated in some primary schools in the districts that were under the pilot phase (CBE preliminary reports, 2009). What is expected is that these learners will continue schooling up to Standard 8 in the schools that they are being integrated. So far, there has been no known study conducted in Malawi to reveal academic and social experiences of the learners from CBE schools during the process of their integration in formal primary schools. This study endeavored to address this gap by exploring the academic and social experiences of graduates who followed the third alternative: rejoining primary school.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Some studies on CBE in Malawi have sought to understand views of learners who were under the pilot phase from 2006 to 2008 while other studies have focused on evaluating the CBE

pilot phase (Moleni & Nampota, 2007; Malcolm, 2009; Nampota, 2009). In general, these studies show that CBE learners aged between 9 and 13 registered greater interest to rejoin primary schools upon completion of their education at the CBE schools after the stipulated three years. Furthermore, the CBE programme in Malawi expects learners rejoining formal primary schooling to be integrated in the schools and continue with their education.

However, so far no study has been conducted in Malawi to explore the academic and social experiences of these learners as they integrate in formal primary schools. Tinto, (1993; 1975) asserts that successful integration is determined by both academic and social integrative experiences of a student in a new institution. Learners who experience intellectual success in the new institution are likely to integrate well in the new environment. Similarly, learners who feel socially accommodated are likely to be smoothly integrated in the new institution. These two parameters governing learners' integration emanate from learners interaction with both teachers and fellow learners. This study focused on these two parameters to discern CBE learners' integration levels into formal education institutions.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore academic and social experiences of learners from CBE as they integrate into the formal primary schools. Firstly, on the academic experiences, the focus of the study was on the learners' general class performance and academic challenges encountered during their integration into formal schooling. Secondly, on social experiences, the study focussed on how learners interact with regular learners and members of staff (teachers), their involvement in sporting activities and play, the support they got from the service providers of CBE and the education system.

1.6 Key research questions

This study was guided by one main question, “What are the experiences of learners from CBE schools as they integrate into formal primary schools?” In order to get an in-depth understanding of the learners’ experiences, the following sub-questions guided the study:

1. What are the academic and social experiences of CBE learners during their integration into formal primary schools?
2. What are the experiences of teachers and head teachers in primary schools where learners from CBE are integrated?
3. What support do learners from CBE receive during their integration into primary schools?
4. What factors are promoting or acting against successful integration of CBE learners into formal schools?

1.7 Significance of the study

The provision of non-formal basic education is relatively new in Malawi (MoEST, 2008). The significance of this study is three-folded. Firstly, it has provided a body of literature on the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE schools as they integrate into formal primary schools from the Malawian context. Secondly, the successes and challenges of the integration of learners from CBE into formal schooling discussed in this study may be of help to policy makers and policy implementers in their efforts to improve the provision of CBE in Malawi. Thirdly, the study has addressed the silence in literature on CBE in Malawi about the integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools.

1.8 Definition of terms

One of the terms that are frequently used in this study is *formal education (schooling)*. This term refers to structured learning process which follows a prescribed curriculum with fixed time tables, running from primary through university, with a formalized assessment system that leads to a recognized certification/qualification.

Another term that frequently occurs is that of *basic education*. Basic education in the Malawian context describes the level of education which involves the acquisition of knowledge, numeracy and literacy skills, vocational and expressive arts skills from primary schools and special non-formal education programs. CBE, therefore, provides basic education just like primary schools do.

Furthermore, the term *non-formal education* is used to describe any non-chargeable organized systematic education activities such as adult education, lifelong education activities and skill training programs that are deliberately initiated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other Government ministries apart from the Ministry of Education. These educational activities may also target out-of-school children and youth. The interest of this study was is on CBE which in Malawi falls under non-formal education, as one of the components of basic education policy. In addition, the term *non-formal schools* is used to describe institutions organized by NGOs and resemble formal schools in that they aim at transmitting basic education knowledge and skills. In this study examples of non-formal schools have been mentioned such as *Sukulu za Tsogolo la Abuthu* (schools for the future of the young ones) in Chikhwawa, School for Life (SfL) in Ghana and Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committees (BRAC) in Bangladesh.

Out-of-school children and youth is another term which has used here to describe all young persons who are not in the formal school system because they have dropped out of school or they have never been registered into any formal school at all for various reasons.

Another term used in this study is *dropouts* to describe young persons who have stopped going to formal school for various reasons. In his study the term has been used to describe learners who rejoined primary schools from CBE schools but have stopped attending primary school education.

The term *underserved groups* has also been used in this study, to describe children and youth who cannot afford government services of appropriate quality because of their low socio-economic backgrounds and gender the geographical positions of the services while the term *regular learners* is used to refer to all learners in primary schools that have never attended CBE schools.

Finally, the term *integration* is used in this study to refer to the process of assimilating learners from CBE into primary schools both academically and socially with the aim of retaining them until they achieve their aspirations or goals. It has been used as the topic of interest to explore the experiences of learners from CBE into the primary schools, they have rejoined with the aim of providing base-line information for policy advancement.

1.9 Limitations of the study

One limitation was contextual in nature in that the study was limited to one district, Chikhwawa. As such the findings may only be transferred to contexts with similar characteristics, but not generalised. For instance, the findings may shape studies that may be conducted in other districts in Malawi that underwent the CBE pilot phase or in other

countries that are implementing similar programmes. Another limitation was that some learners from CBE being integrated into formal primary schools were not free and open to share their experiences. One explanation could be cultural: in a Malawian culture, young ones are not supposed to say bad things against elders such as their teachers. This was taken care of by assuring the learners of their privacy as their names were not mentioned.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has introduced the study on the experiences of learners rejoining formal primary schools in from CBE schools in Chikhwawa district. A brief background of CBE programme in Malawi has been described, followed by statement of the problem, purpose of the study, key research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms used in the study and limitation to this study. Its main claim is that the study was necessary to fill the gap in literature on the experiences of learners from CBE during their integration in formal primary school.

CHAPTER: 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents a review of literature on complementary basic education (CBE) as a component of non-formal education (NFE). The aim is to locate the study within a body of literature on CBE. Firstly, it highlights the problem of out-of school children from a global and Malawian context to which CBE is a response. Secondly, a brief synthesis is presented of Education for All (EFA) and NFE as attempts to reduce the problem of out-of-school children and youth. Thirdly, CBE as new approach to addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth its characteristics and examples are described. Fourthly, Malawi's experience of CBE is discussed. Lastly, a theoretical framework of the study is described and justified.

2.2 Attempts to reduce out-of-school children

Complementary Basic Education has evolved from non-formal education which became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Coombs, 1985; McGivney & Murray, 1991; Ruto, 2004). According to these authors, evolution of NFE was largely a reaction or response to the growing problem of illiteracy. In the 1970s a number of countries were beginning to turn to the idea of mass NFE because of the apparent and large scale of the problem of growing illiteracy (Fordham, 1993). In other words, it was the high level of illiterate population worldwide that forced many countries to begin implementing NFE programmes.

2.2.1 Non-formal education in perspective

Countries realise that the problem which arises when there are a lot of out-of-school children and youth is that a country nurtures future illiterate and non-productive citizens that will fail to help in the socio-economic development of that nation. This is because education is a catalyst for socio-economic development of any country (MOEST, 2008). Faundez (1988) as quoted by McGivney & Murray (1991, p. 10) also asserts that “we cannot conceive of development in absence of education any more than education in the absence of development.” In support of this view, Lewin (1995) argues that there is widespread evidence about the positive relationship between education, wealth creation and realization of basic needs.

One of the attempts to address the problem of out-of-school children and youth is that of NFE. Commenting on the story of NFE in Africa, Ruto (2004) observes that the concept of NFE in Africa is as old as that of humankind and it was there before formal schooling. She further asserts that in the NFE setting in Africa, peers, older children, parents and other elders in the villages posed as teachers from whom young ones learnt societal beliefs, norms, virtues, values, and apprenticeship skills. Coombs (1976, p. 282) and Wilson (1997) had earlier contended that various forms of NFE aimed at transmitting a heritage of values, customs, beliefs, technologies and skills to new generations through forms such as puberty rites, religious ceremonies and occupational apprenticeships. In this education, there was no classroom setup, no systematic curriculum and no evaluation method, except in initiation schools where a component of systematic curriculum and evaluation were part of the system (Ruto, 2004).

When formal education was introduced in Africa, the emphasis was on production of human power that would help in mostly administrative issues. The result was that only a handful was targeted and therefore only a handful benefitted from it. The majority were therefore left out, something that left a gap in application of innovative ideas and skills between the majority illiterate and the few who were given formal education (Ruto, 2004). Consequently, there was a growing need to address the problem of the majority illiterate; otherwise it would have been very difficult to meet various education goals (Coombs, 1976; Ruto, 2004; Wilson, 1997).

The readiness of Africa as a continent to embrace alternative forms of education was declared at the Ministers of Education of Africa (MINEDAF) conference held in Harare in 1982 (Ruto, 2004). This conference came as a result of dysfunctional education systems which most African countries were experiencing. It was realised that there was a need to focus on merging NFE, in the case of this study, the CBE, with the formal education; and also that the current NFE programmes should be thoroughly examined by collecting basic data so as to establish a wider variety of characteristics so that NFE initiatives that provide basic education are seen to be in line with the overall national framework of basic education (Hoppers, 2006, p. 12). By lining NFE initiatives alongside overall national framework of basic education in Formal Education, weaknesses, strengths and potential of NFE initiatives can be known in a more objective manner and this form a basis for political decision making (Hoppers, 2007, p. 5). In this way, NFE initiatives such as the CBE can serve to increase second chance education opportunities to the underserved children and youth in developing countries (DeStefano, Hartwell, Benbow & Moore, 2007).

Thus, the Government of Malawi and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) realised the serious implications of having increased numbers of illiterate people. Several NFE initiatives were therefore made to redress the situation. According to Chombo (1995), the term non-formal education in Malawi has been used to refer to a wide range of planned educational activities outside the formal basic education. Such activities are used to impart knowledge and skills deemed necessary for survival, improving production and introducing new technologies and technical innovation (Chombo, 1995).

Non-formal education programs started to gain ground in Malawi as early as 1960. From that time up to the 1970s, the programs primarily offered three types of educational opportunities. Firstly, it was an alternative education for those who lacked the opportunity to acquire formal education. Secondly, it was a continuation of formal education for those who wanted to get into productive employment or become self-employed. Thirdly, it was as an opportunity for upgrading skills and academic qualifications for those people already in employment (Chombo, 1995).

One of the earliest NFE programmes in Malawi was the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) movement which started in 1963 as a political movement. MYP targeted primary school age youth aged between 14 and 35 although 87% of the group were in the 16-25 age groups (Hauya, 1990 as cited by Chombo, 1995, p 1). In addition, there was also *Ukani* Traditional Literacy Classes (UTL) and Agriculture Extension Programmes (AEP). Worth noting is the fact that these NFE programmes had put more emphasis on rural development through training in agriculture, metal work, carpentry and leadership skills or enabling illiterate adults aged between 15 and above to acquire literacy and numeracy skills so as to improve agricultural skills and practices among farmers in rural areas (Chombo, 1995).

From 1986, implementation of NFE in Malawi took a slightly different approach. Chombo (1995) and Swann (2007) observe that the Government of Malawi, with support from various stakeholders, began to put more emphasis on NFE as a means of addressing the problem of illiteracy among the youths and adults aged from 15 and above. This was done through the National Adult Literacy Programme (NALP).

However, prior to 2006 the NFE programmes did not take into account the needs of children aged below 15 who were out of school and illiterate or those who had dropped out from primary schools before they had attained literacy and numeracy skills. Because their emphasis was on adults, the programmes did not have a component of integrating their graduates into primary schools. The main objective of these interventions was to enable illiterate adults aged 15 and above to acquire and use literacy and numeracy skills in their socio-economic life (Chombo, 1995; Swann, 2007). In so doing, they would improve their status, general knowledge and technical skills. At the same time, these NFE programmes were allocated in ministries outside education, such as Ministries of Gender, Child welfare and Community Services, Youth, Sports and Culture (Swann, 2007).

As it is observed, target groups of these NFE programmes, objectives for their establishment and the Ministries that provided the services of these programmes, raise no question as to why out-of-school children and youth of the school-going age were not targeted. These children and youth could not be considered as part of the targeted groups because Ministry of Education was not among the Ministries that provided those programmes.

Through the National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2008-2017) and other policy documents such as the Education status report and the Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), the Government of Malawi started the provision of basic education to the large numbers of out-

of-school children and youth. Thus, from 2006, the provision of NFE took a different outlook. NFE intervention aimed at equipping the learners with literacy and numeracy skills which are prerequisite cognitive tools for socio-economic development for an individual and society in general (MoEST, 2008). NFE was also designed to cater for the achievement of poverty reduction (Nampota & Moleni, 2006).

Consequently, in the case of Malawi the birth of NFE policy initiatives was set against the background of poor literacy levels (Swann, 2007). Haddad (1995) contends that a policy change is normally a response to a problem or a set of problems in a sector and understanding such a change must start with an appreciation of the educational sector and its context. This is also true for the adoption of NFE initiatives in Malawi which was introduced with the aim of removing barriers that hindered children and youth from low socio-economic backgrounds to attend school. With the adoption of Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in 1994, learner enrollment in primary schools in Malawi rose from just about 2 million to nearly 3 million in 1994 alone, representing a 50% increase in enrolments (MoESC, 2001).

However, FPE faced a number of challenges which included: shortage of qualified teachers, inadequate and inferior physical infrastructure, inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor monitoring and supervisory systems, and poor participation of school committees and their communities in school management (MoEST, 2005). Other challenges included failure of parents to encourage their children to go to school, poverty, hunger, negative teacher's attitudes towards learners and orphanhood of learners (Swann, 2007). All these challenges have led to an increased number of pupils dropping out from school (Swann, 2007, 2; Rose, 2007, p. 36).

2.2.2. Education for All (EFA) in perspectives

Education for All (EFA) is another attempt to address the problem of out-of-school children and youth. Presently, there is greater realisation among African governments that education for all for children and young people is unlikely to be achieved through expansion of the conventional school system only, with its residential and day-time provision, its age-graded enrolments, its teacher-delivered standard national curricula, its 6/7/8/9-year cycle and its almost exclusive focus on urban-and future-oriented knowledge and cognitive competencies (Hartwell, DeStefano & Benbow, 2006; Destefano, 2006; Hoppers, 2007).

The EFA framework for Sub-Saharan Africa identifies the need to consider accelerated and Non-formal alternative (complementary) approaches for reaching underserved children particularly in remote and often harsh deprived environments. According to DeStefano et al. (2007) these challenges call for special approaches if Universal Primary Completion (UPC) is to be attained by 2015. Complementary Education Approaches therefore have emerged as a successful tool for addressing the educational needs of marginalized communities in the developing world and can serve better the most disadvantaged and/or remote areas. Thus, it was realised that focusing on conventional approaches to primary schooling alone was having little chance of providing the much needed education to a high proportion of out-of-school or the hard-to-reach children (Farrell, 2001 Hoppers, 2007). This was attributed to both demand and supply problems.

On the problem of supply, Moore, DeStefano, & Gillies, (2005) observe that the rising educational inputs, teacher recruitment and retention affect the ability of ministries of education to staff isolated schools. On the demand side, Moore et al., (2005) contends that the long distance of schools from communities hinder children especially girls to attend school,

creating the problem of access and equity. These problems of access and equity being experienced in the Formal Education setting have made the international community realise that without changing how educational opportunities are delivered in many developing countries, the goals of EFA will not be achieved using formal alternatives only (Moore et al., 2005).

One way through which education developers, decision and policy makers have sought to address the challenges of access and equity to formal schooling is through innovative Non-Formal initiatives such as Complementary Basic Education approaches (Moore et al., 2005).

One of the challenges facing EFA is the failure by some learners to complete formal primary schooling. Studies on primary school dropout rate in Malawi show that the survival rate of pupils is low as learners move from Standard 1 to 8. For instance, Nampota & Moleni (2006) show that pupils who enrol in Standard 1 just about half reach Standard 4 and that only approximately 20% complete Standard 8. However, a survey by EMIS Annual Statistics (2006, p. 18) indicated that there was a slight increase in survival rate for Standard 8 from 2004 to 2006. For instance, it was 24.6% in 2004, 26.6% in 2005 and 26.6% in 2006. It can be argued that these percentages are not on the higher side, indicating that not even half of the pupils who initially enrolled in Standard 1 reached Standard 8.

Another study by Kadzamira & Nell (2004) also showed that in Malawi survival rate of pupils in primary schools is still not high even for lower primary school classes. The study concluded that only 50% of children that enrol for Standard 1 survive up to standard 4 and less than 20% complete the full 8-year cycle of primary schooling. Another study by Swann (2008, p. 1) shows that by 2004, the population in Malawi over the age of 15 years stood at about 6.3 million; of these 35.9% were illiterate. Moleni et al. (2005, p. iii) explain this rate

of illiteracy as a result of the fact that the majority of pupils leave school before they reach Standard 5 and before attaining literacy and numeracy skills. In general, the trend shows that school dropout rate is problem in Malawi and there is a need for interventions to address the problem of out-of-school children and youth. The CBE programme is one of such interventions. Table 2.1 shows the survival rate for pupils in Standard 5 in Malawi from 2004 to 2005.

Table 2.1: Survival rate for Standard 5 (2004-2006)

Year	Survival Rate (%)
2004	47.4
2005	49.8
2006	53

Source: EMIS Annual Statistics 2006: 18

The table shows the proportion of a cohort of Standard 1 pupils who reached Standard 5 between 2004 and 2006. Although these statistics show a slight increase in the survival rate of pupils but it was still on the lower side.

Low retention rate at primary school level reflects the difficulty of realising Education for All and this has serious repercussions for a country's development. Research world-wide shows that people who have a good primary education are likely to be more productive in life than those who have not (MoEST, 2009). This is because, in general, primary education is the sub-sector which affects the greatest number of people and is also the basis for all other education (MoEST, 2008, p 9). It is against this background that more innovative NFE programs, designed to cater for out- of- school children and youth as well as adults who had never had a chance of going to school, are more important.

2.2.3 Complementary basic education as a new approach

Different countries have come up with different model of CBE as a response to the problem of out of school youth. Colcough (1996) observes that it is obvious that the various reasons as to why many children remain out of school in developing countries reflect the complexity of the phenomenon of out-of-school children and youth. Colcough (1996) further contends that it is common in most countries that the national systems fail to reach populations that can be characterised as historically underserved. It is also observed that even when national services are accessible, they are often dysfunctional, extremely low in quality and unresponsive to the needs of a diverse clientele (World Bank, 2004). For instance, by 2005, the vast majority of the 130 million children who did not go to school lived in rural areas (UNESCO, 2005). Despite the fact that the number of children of the school-going age who were out of school fell from 103 million in 1999 to 73 million in 2006, around 38 million children of primary school age in Sub- Saharan Africa still remained out of school, and in Asia, the enrolment ratio rose to 90%, but more than 18 million children of primary school-going age were also still not enrolled (M0EST, 2008).

The statistics on out-of-school children and youth as indicated above confirm the failure of formal education systems to achieve Education for All unless other forms of provision of basic education are employed. Earlier on, Coombs (1968, p. 178) proposed that:

A developing country must use NFE not only to build upon the previous formal education of a small fraction of its citizens, but more especially to raise the economic and social level of the vast majority of its citizens who never acquired literacy.

It is in this sense that CBE can be described as an attempt to uplift the economic and social status of the underprivileged. Bock (1976) also notes that, the significance of NFE lies in its potential to bring about educational and socio-economic change at both the individual and national levels. This makes NFE a new strategy for combating poverty, ignorance, inequality, ill-health and oppression (Bock, 1976). This study argues that CBE is a new approach in the attempts to reduce out-of-school children and youth.

2.2.4 Characteristics of CBE

Literature reflects that the success of CBE programmes is due to their unique characteristics (DeStefano et al, 2007; Hartwell, 2006; Hoppers, 2006). These include the fact that classes are run within villages where children come from; the use of reduced curriculum; the fact that learners are not required to put on school uniform; the provision of learning materials by service providers and that no punishment is given to defaulters (learners who absent themselves from CBE classes). These characteristics are discussed below.

One characteristic is that CBE programmes use a curriculum similar to (though often reduced or condensed) the Government schools (DeStefano et al., 2006) For instance, in Ghana and Zambia, the curricula are modified to shorten the primary cycle. The Ghana School for Life covers grades 1-3 in a nine month program. In Zambia, a CBE initiative known as the Zambian Skills, Participation and Access to Relevant Knowledge (SPARK) condenses seven grades of basic education into four years. In the case of Malawi, the CBE program condenses five grades of formal primary school into three years. This means that learners cover work within a short time but enough to enable them rejoin formal primary schooling at higher classes. Thus in Ghana after nine months CBE graduates rejoin formal primary school in grade 4 while in Zambia the graduates rejoin formal primary school in grade 8 after four

years. In Malawi, the graduates are expected to rejoin formal primary school in grade 6 after three years in CBE schools. This shortened span attracts out of school children and youth to attend CBE classes.

Another important feature of the CBE programmes is that the curriculum is designed to serve the needs of the communities, with teaching and learning methods developed to suit the local children. The implication of this is that the CBE Curriculum is seen as representing, the situation of CBE learners (Moleni & Nampota, 2007, p. 29). However, it can be suggested that this may, in a way, have some negative effects in the integration of learners from these approaches into the formal primary schools.

Furthermore, the reduced distance between CBE schools and homes of learners is another characteristic of the CBE programs. This reduces the distance learners have to cover from home to the schools. Studies on access to basic education implicate distance to school as a significant barrier to access, especially for girls (DeStefano, et al., 2006). Since CBE schools are located in villages where families live, learners can easily enrol and attend school regularly.

The location of the school also ensures that parents and the community can hold teachers accountable for their presence (DeStefano, et al., 2006). For instance, the location and size of school made a difference in Guatemala, Northern Ghana, Upper Egypt, Bangladesh, Zambia, Mali, and Afghanistan. Study findings indicated that rural populations under-enrolled in regular public schools because children especially girls who lived more than a kilometre of walking distance from school, did not attend (DeStefano, et al., 2006). DeStefano et al (2006) further observes that during the mid-1990s, girls' enrolment in the

rural villages of Upper Egypt was estimated to be as low as 15%. When asked why their daughters were not enrolled in school, families cited the distance they would have to walk to the nearest school as the primary reason for non-enrolment.

In addition, another characteristic of CBE programs is the use of mother tongues as both literacy language and medium of instruction (Hoppers, 2007 DeStefano et al., 2006). The use of mother tongue ensures that pupils learn in a language they can speak and understand with a curriculum that delivers focused content. However, while it is true that use of mother tongue promotes learning among learners, it still creates questions on how learners from these programs who get integrated into upper classes in the formal school system understand subjects that are taught in foreign language such as English.

The flexibility of the CBE calendar and class timetable is another characteristic. These are determined by the community and they ensure that children's classes do not overlap with seasons when they are needed for planting and harvesting (Rogers, 2004; Farrell, 2001). On average, the classes run for 3-4 hours each day for five days in a week. The daily timing of the classes changes to suit the community. For example, during a planting season classes may be held in the afternoon only or suspended for a short while. This is different from the formal school, where the calendar and timetable do not necessarily take into account the community needs. However, Moleni & Nampota (2007) show that some learners, in CBE schools, initially dropped from formal schooling because of their obligation to assist in household chores such as farming activities. In view of that, this study explored what happens on this aspect when learners from CBE rejoined primary schools in Chikhwawa district.

Another characteristic is that CBE class size is small as compared to the situation in public schools (Farrell, 2001 & Hoppers, 2006). This allows a favourable atmosphere for teaching

and learning in that it is easy to employ participatory teaching methodologies. At the same time it creates conducive environment for facilitators to pay attention to each individual learner unlike public primary schools where, in most cases, classes are overcrowded. Furthermore, CBE schools have adequate supply of learning materials since they are run mostly by NGOs which provide such materials. This attracts learners who usually come from poor families.

However, Destefano, (2005), contends that these very characteristics that contribute to the success of CBE programs become challenges for those graduates rejoining formal primary schools. For instance, some of the graduates from SfL in Ghana were unable to access formal education due to lack of finance, lack of schools in close proximity and learning material support (Hayford, 2003 & CARE, 2003)

2.2.5 Examples of CBE models

Literature reflects different models of CBE and this section describes some examples both from Africa and outside Africa. As argued in this study, CBE emerged as a new tool for addressing the problem of out-of-school children and youth. It provides structured programmes of learning in a non-institutional environment based on a learner-centred curriculum and flexible schedule (Adam-Issa et al., 2002). The CBE models are designed to eliminate both the defects and traditions of formal schooling.

Moore et al. (2005) describe CBE models as working in support of the formal public system, offering students an alternative route to achieving the same educational outcomes as students in the formal schools. The programmes, under these models, are designed to help learners rejoin formal primary schools, at various entry points. In this way, CBE programmes are

making a contribution towards the achievement of EFA goals. Thus, owing to the success of these programs, various countries have replicated some CBE models (Moore et al., 2005).

Different CBE models can and have been implemented in other countries depending on a number of factors. Chimombo (2005, p. 141) argues that, “the extent to which these strategies can be implemented in other countries will depend on social, economic cultural contexts.” He further asserts that one major problem with alternative approaches to the delivery of basic education has been that in almost all cases, these programmes tend to provide an education of low quality to the poor and disadvantaged (Chimombo, 2005). In addition, the teachers who teach in these programmes are mostly insufficiently trained. Albeit, many of these CBE initiatives have been evaluated as being effective in increasing access to under-served groups of hard-to-reach children, and improving achievement especially in literacy and numeracy (Farrell, 2001; Action AID, 2002; DeStefano et al., 2006; Hoppers, 2006, 2007; Moore et al., 2006; Rose, 2007).

In general, studies show that performance of children in CBE schools is reported to be at least as good as in government primary schools (Rose, 2007; Hyde, Kadzamira, Sichinga & Ridker, 1996; Miske & Dowd 1998). It is important at this stage to note that CBE models have different outputs. Some models aim at equipping the learners with vocational and livelihood skills only. Others train learners by giving them vocational and livelihood skills, incorporating an additional output of re-routing them into government or formal primary schools. The latter, thus, does have an integrative element; providing an opportunity for CBE graduates to rejoin and be integrated into formal schooling. For the purpose of this study, only CBE models that have an integrative component have been described with the aim of gaining insights about the integration of learners from CBE schools into formal primary

schools. Such insights have been related to the experiences of CBE graduates rejoining and being integrated into formal primary schools in Chikhwawa District (as discussed Chapter 4).

Bangladesh rural advancement committee (BRAC)

One example is the *Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee* (BRAC). As a model of CBE, BRAC was introduced in Bangladesh by the mid-1980s (DeStefano, et al., 2007). By 1984, it had launched 22 experimental, one-room, non-formal primary education (NFPE) centres for children of the rural poor. Realising that girls were even less likely to attend formal schools than boys; the BRAC centres enrolled 70 percent girls, hired and trained a teaching staff of more than 70 percent females, and adapted its life skills-oriented adult literacy materials as more child-centred materials. By 1996, BRAC as a CBE model helped to reduce the number of out-of-school and youth by enrolling approximately 10 percent of all primary school enrolments.

In 1999, BRAC major programme developed into three programmes of schooling. The three programmes were based on age and physical areas. The first programme covered grades 1 to 5 in four years. It targeted learners between the ages 8 and 10 years. This programme targeted the underprivileged in both rural and urban areas and was known as BRAC Primary Schools (BPSs). The second programme known as BRAC Adolescent Primary Schools (BAPSs) covered a period of four years for children between the ages of 11 and 14, covering grades 1 to 4. Still it also targeted the underserved. The third programme known as Education Support Program Schools (ESPs) covered three years for 8- to 10-year-olds, covering grades 1 to 3 in underserved areas and was implemented by other organizations already working in those areas. This reflects the characteristic of condensed curriculum for CBE (as discussed in chapter 2, section.3.1). In addition, grouping learners according to their ages ensured the BRAC provided education according to their abilities and needs.

However, despite all these efforts in BRAC programmes, over the past 20 years, adult literacy rates in Bangladesh have remained consistently low (Nath, 2002). One issue that arises from BRAC's own studies relates to problems students face when transferring from BRAC schools as a model of complementary basic education into formal government schools. For instance, those from BRAC programmes often face difficulties as they are not prepared for the different teaching and learning styles and, therefore, may dropout (Nath, 2002). Prather, (1993, p. 105) earlier on noted that using BRAC as a feeder programme of its graduates into formal schools presents its onset of obstacles such as weaknesses of primary schools with their poor learning environment, weak management and supervision, low teacher morale, which are contrary to BRAC schools that have a supportive learning environment with sympathetic teachers. This led to high dropout rate of its first cohort that transferred into primary schools.

Appropriate cost-effective centres for education (ACCESS)

Another example of CBE models is *Appropriate, Cost-effective Centres for Education within the School System* (ACCESS) managed by Action Aid in Tanzania. Action AID Tanzania (2002) it targets girls from low socio-economic backgrounds and the central idea of this model is to provide basic education for children, in an appropriate, flexible and cost effective way. The children attending ACCESS centres eventually join the formal school system. But unlike the formal schools, ACCESS emphasises flexibility in order to accommodate the needs of children living in poor communities or difficult circumstances. Children completing their basic education at these centres take the national standard 4 examinations to ensure that there would not be problems of placement of graduates from ACCESS when they rejoin formal schools (Action AID Tanzania, 2002). Graduates from ACCESS centres fit into the formal school programme after completing years of CBE education, often performing better than children in formal primary schools. Thus, Like the BRAC model, ACCESS seeks to see more out-of-school girls join CBE.

School for Life (SfL)

In addition, *School for Life* (SfL) in Ghana is another example of CBE models. This started in the mid-1990s by some organizations supported by DANIDA. It targets out-of-school children between the ages of 8 and 12 who did not receive any primary schooling (Adam-Issa et al., 2002, p.15). The programme is designed to ultimately help learners rejoin and integrate into formal schooling upon graduation from CBE schools. Commenting on the performance of SfL learners, Adam-Issa et al. (2005) observes that one third of the students can read fluently after nine months and more than 60% of the graduates enter the formal school system and continue their education. This also reflects the characteristic of condensed curriculum for CBE (as discussed in chapter 2, section 3.1).

By 2001, SfL enrolled about 36,044 pupils and mainstreamed or integrated 22,090 into the formal school system. This represents over a 50% success rate in terms of the number of students SfL has been able to mainstream into the formal system. Out of the total mainstreamed, about 41% were girls and 59% boys (Hayford, 2003). In 2004, 10,959 pupils were enrolled in SfL, a total number of 10,586 graduated and 8,940 pupils (boys 5,254, girls 3,686), were integrated into the public system (Destefano et al., 2007, p. 93).

In the Gushegu District of the Northern Region, in 2007, 50% of Formal School children were graduates of School for Life (Hayford & Ghartey, 2007). The effectiveness of SfL is evidence of learning, as reflected by the achievement of minimum levels of competency in reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy (DeStefano et al., 2007, p. 94). This reflects the School for Life assertion that functional literacy in the mother tongue provides a strong platform for acquiring literacy in a second language (DeStefano et al., 2007, p. 94). The success disputed the fear that the learners would not do well in public schools considering the fact that the language of instruction in Ghanaian public schools is English yet in School for life, learners are taught in local languages.

The success of the learners from SfL in the public schools agrees with Tinto's (1993) theory of student retention and departure which states that if pre-entry attributes interact well with academic and social experiences in the new institution learners are likely to perform well, hence promote learner persistence in school. In other words, there was an interaction of attributes of competences in literacy and numeracy acquired through mother tongue in SfL with new institution's experiences in the public schools. Put simply, School for Life students were able to transfer their literacy skills from local language to English. In many cases they were even performing much better than students who only had previous exposure to the formal school system (DeStefano et al., 2007, p. 94). According to Hayford and Gharthey (2007), some parents and education officials in School for Life communities even recommended that all pupils attend School for Life before entering the formal school system.

An important lesson in this CBE is that service providers for School for Life in Ghana in conjunction with Ghanaian Government seem to have only concentrated on the re-routing children from SfL back into primary schools without taking into account or solving problems to do with the newer experiences such as distance to new schools and other forms of continued support to those who intended to re-join primary schools.

Complementary basic education and training (COBET)

An example of CBE model is that followed in Tanzania where the Ministry of Education and Culture initiated a nation-wide programme aimed at the nearly 3 million children estimated to be out of school. This programme is known as *Complementary Basic Education and Training* (COBET). It was established with the aim of providing a non-formal version of the 7-year primary curriculum to all 7-10 year olds. The most striking characteristic of this program is

that learners learn in a very child friendly environment where no physical punishment is given to the learners (Hoppers 2006, p. 68). This raises a question on how learners who rejoin formal education systems cope with issues of punishment in the new public school (formal) setting.

Move 4 new horizons

Another example of a CBE model is *Move 4 new horizons* (M4NH) in Nepal (Kunz, 2010). It is an educational programme for disadvantaged out-of-school children, implemented by the Swiss Academy for Development (SAD) and the Nepalese grassroots organisation called Dalit Welfare Organisation (DWO). This CBE model offers 15 CBE classes in different rural villages. The classes last for nine months and are led by trained facilitators who are recruited from the young village population. They teach the participating children basic reading, writing and mathematics skills and provide well-guided sport and play activities (Kunz, 2010). After nine months, efforts are made to integrate the participants into the public school system.

According to Kunz (2010), the project targets children between the age of five and ten years, who had not been able to attend school. Children are taught the basic reading, writing and calculating skills in a child-friendly and non-formal way. Unique about this model is that teaching also includes a well designed sport and play component. By including sport and play activities, the curriculum brings out an innovative approach towards education, thereby supporting child development in a holistic way (Kunz, 2010). This is because by playing in interaction with other children, the child learns to gain trust, empathy, respect and tolerance for others and to cooperate, to manage conflicts, to obey rules and to act within a team (Kunz, 2010). At the same time, the child's development in frustrations (like losing a game), offers

him/her with an opportunity to manage aggression. As such, the aim is far more than the formal learning progress of the children as it also supports the children's development of life skills and efforts to increase their self-confidence and inner strength. Thus, sport and play activities do complement the more formal teaching in the classroom very well (Kunz, 2010).

In support of Kunz line of thinking about holistic development of a learner, Mitra (2011) contends that aim of education-curriculum is to provide for the all-round development of the learner: intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual development of the mind, body, heart, personality and knowledge. In view of this Mitra further suggests that after the age of 6 curriculum should be built around curiosity and useful activities. Thus, he proposes that apart from teaching subjects such as language, Physical Science and mathematics, inclusion of Manual work and Social relations is also important because it also promote skill development so as to produce a young generation that is intellectually alert, physically strong and socially committed.

On academic integration of learners into public schools, Kunz (2010) observes that the learners in M4NH performed well in the public school entry tests. This showed that the teaching in M4NH was good. One has to consider the fact that these children, now in public schools, were exclusively children from underprivileged backgrounds that were not used to reading and writing and to sitting still in a classroom for several hours a day, yet all of them were admitted into public schools where the teachers also said highly of their performance (Kunz, 2010). However, there were significant differences in the learning capacities of the children within the CBE classes were as a result of age differences among the learners. Some children were apparently too young to participate in the NFE classes and had difficulties to follow due to their young age (Kunz, 2010).

Kunz's (2010) study also shows that integration of learners from M4NH into public schools is planned for. After nine months, facilitators and social mobilizers make additional efforts to facilitate the transition of CBE learners into public schools, while also closely involving parents and teachers. The children first have to go through a school entry test. The children are then enrolled between grades one and four. Kunz (2010) further reports that the public school teachers were very impressed by the level of CBE graduates and that they saw a clear difference in the performance, motivation and behaviour of these children compared to the regular children.

Furthermore, the role of social mobilizers is crucial for the success of M4NH. The social mobilizers continue making follow up visits to public schools to check on what is happening to the graduates from M4NH. Since the costs of mandatory school uniforms and school materials are a main barrier for parents to enrol their children into formal primary schools, the CBE graduates were provided with a school uniform including shoes and socks, school bags, booklets, pencils, colour pencils, erasers and water bottles as a form of educational support.

As part of creating conducive learning environment for CBE graduates in the formal primary schools, teachers from public schools are also oriented and prepared in a special way. A three-day training workshop is organised per year for public primary school teachers, with the aim of training them on child rights and child-friendly teaching methods as well as antidiscrimination issues. The teaching methods are closely linked to the teaching approach in CBE classes so that the learners rejoining the formal public primary schools should not differentiate teaching approaches used by facilitators in CBE schools from those employed by the public school teachers (Kunz, 2010).

Like other CBE programmes discussed in this section, M4N Horizon demonstrates well planned organisation of procedures to be followed as learners are learning in its schools and what will happen to them after completion of the nine months. Firstly it has the same characteristics of CBE schools (as discussed in chapter 2.3.1). However, there are three additional characteristics that make M4N Horizon unique from the other models discussed above. These characteristics are: the inclusion of a unique characteristic: scheduled sport and play which is timetabled. Furthermore, a planned arrangement of providing a starter packs of learning materials, school uniform and shoes. There is also an arrangement of three-day training workshop organised per year for public primary school teachers, with the aim of training them on how they would handle learners from Move 4 Horizon once they get integrated into formal school system, also makes Move 4 Horizon unique from other models discussed in chapter 2.3.1.

2.3 Malawi's experience with CBE

Although Non-Formal Education has been in Malawi from the 1960s, Malawi's experience with Complementary Basic Education (CBE) began 2006. In an attempt to address the problem of out of school children and youth, the Government of Malawi with support from the German Funding Agency, GTZ, introduced CBE as a three-year span programme. It condenses the formal primary school curriculum for grades one to five into three years of CBE. The aim is to equip out-of-school children and youth with essential knowledge, skills and values so as to promote their self-reliance, lifelong learning and full participation in societal development (Nampota, 2009; Malcolm, 2009 MoEST, 2009; 2005; Moleni et al., 2005).

Complementary basic education started in Malawi as a pilot project in three districts in the country namely: Chikhwawa, Lilongwe Rural and Ntchisi, from 2006 to 2008. Swann (2007) observes that the pilot phase was carried out so as to fully conceptualised CBE and at the same time to inform policy as a non-formal basic education system. After the pilot phase, CBE was rolled out as a programme to all districts in Malawi. As a programme, it targets three categories of out-of-school children and youth. The first category comprises those who have never done any formal primary schooling at all but are of the primary school-going age (7-17 years). The second category involves those who dropped out of primary schools while the third category comprises those who are of the school-going age but are old and feel ashamed to enrol in the formal primary schools.

In addition, Malawi's CBE programme further envisages producing three types of graduates (Moleni & Nampota, 2007). Firstly, those who are of the primary school-going age should to rejoin formal primary schools (9-17 year olds) in Standard 6. Secondly, those who are above the primary school-going age should join vocational training and, thirdly those who do not wish to join formal primary school or vocational training but to continue with normal livelihoods in society.

One characteristics of CBE in Malawi is that, unlike other NFE programs, it has a provision for re-entry into formal education as one of its three outputs upon completion of the three year course. For instance, out-of-school children and youth between the ages of 9 and 17 years are under the primary school age in Malawi and are expected to join CBE schools. Studies show that that children of the younger age group between 9 and 13 years have a greater tendency to join CBE schools than the older ones (MoEST, 2008; Nampota, 2009). It is further expected that the graduates of the CBE programme have sufficient literacy,

numeracy and other basic skills equivalent to regular learners in Standard 5 in formal primary schools and thus, upon completion of a three years at a CBE school, a learner can re-join primary school at Standard 6 like someone who has completed Standard 5 in a formal primary school (MoEST, 2008).

Despite tremendous efforts by the Malawi Government to reduce the problem of out-of-school children and youth, studies show that the dropout of children and youth from formal primary schools remains one of the greatest challenges (Moleni et al., 2005; MoEST, 2009). For instance Moleni et al., (2005, p. iii), further assert that by 2005, “over a quarter of a million children dropped out of school either permanently or temporarily without having achieved the basic competencies”. Another study on EFA shows that the average completion rate from 2004-2008 was still below 35% (GoM, 2008). These statistics show that only a small proportion of children who enter the formal primary school system complete the full cycle of primary education. Moleni et al (2005) and GoM (2009), argue that it is unlikely that Malawi will attain EFA and MDG goals by 2015 unless some intervening policies and strategies are put in place to either reduce the high dropout rate or find alternative means of providing basic education to children out-of-school. The argument of this study is that the CBE policy adopted in 2006 is one of such alternative means to provide basic education. It is therefore important to explore the experiences of CBE graduates during the integration in formal primary school as one way of appreciating the input of CBE to the overall basic education in Malawi.

Like elsewhere, CBE in Malawi has the following characteristics: the CBE schools are regarded as an organic part of the community; there is community involvement in school governance; local language is used as the medium of instruction; it relies on volunteer

teachers; there is emphasis on partnerships and collaboration with local education authorities of primary schools; and it has reduced curriculum which matches specified number of years of the primary curriculum. This was done with the aim of assuring equivalency and the ability of children to re-enter primary schools (MoEST, 2008).

However, findings of Moleni & Nampota (2007) in their study about *Complementary basic education in Malawi: Term two evaluation* of CBE pilot phase and similarly, Nampota (2009) in her study about *What should count as worthwhile knowledge in determining a curriculum for supporting out-of-school children and youth*, show that learners in CBE performed relatively well in Chichewa and Mathematics. These studies also show that learners in CBE schools did not perform well in English. Thus, it came imperative for this study to explore more on this aspect. This is because results to the exploration of that aspect would bring about answers to one of the subsidiary questions of this study which sought to explore academic experiences of learners who were being integrated in primary schools.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The study was guided by Tinto's (1975; 1993) theory of student retention and departure. This theory was originally used to explain why minority groups of students entering colleges of higher learning in America persisted to completion while others departed. The theory focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on the events which occur within the institution of learning following entry and /or which immediately precede entrance to it (Tinto, 1993; 1975). Braxton & Hirschy (2005) describe this as an interactionalist theory of student retention and departure. What the two authors meant was that persisting to degree attainment or departing higher education is a complicated interplay among many factors which include prior knowledge and skills which students bring with them that are continually in interaction with those of the new institution.

Furthermore, a key element of the theory of student retention and departure is the notion of integration. In the main, the notion of integration states that a student is more likely to stay in the course in a new learning environment if there is a match between his/her pre-entry attributes and academic and social characteristics of the new institution, if these do not match the student is likely to depart (Tinto, 1993; 1975). The term new institution is used in this study to refer to a new learning environment for a student and, more specifically, to the formal primary school which the CBE graduates rejoin and integrate into.

In addition, central to this theory is the proposition that students have various pre-entry attributes that interact with and integrate into the academic and social systems of the new institution (Tinto, 1993). The proposition further states that individuals possess pre-entry attributes which include family background (for example: socio-economic status and parental education), individual attributes (for instance: age and gender), educational experiences and achievements and other prior schooling experiences. The claim here is that these pre-entry dispositions or attributes influence an individual's choice of goals and commitments in the new learning environment. For Tinto (1975), the intentions or goals specify both the level and type of education and occupation desired by the individual.

Other studies have also outlined the importance of taking into consideration of pre-entry attributes which would influence successful integration of learners into the new institution. Smith, (2007) contends that age of learners and how it affects or assist their progress in both CBE and formal schools, support for graduates on entry into formal schools are among crucial issues that discussions on utilisation of complementary education programmes or strategies.

In this study questions were also framed in line with issues of prior literacy and numeracy competencies, age and socio-economic status of families of the learners from CBE schools. However, it should be noted that, the goals for rejoining formal primary schools for learners from CBE schools are rather based on their future aspirations and not the type of primary school which they rejoined as it would be the case with students who join higher learning institutions. Their commitments, thus, have been analysed in terms of the degree to which individuals learners rejoining primary schools were committed both to the attainment of their goals and in terms of institutional commitment (commitment to the norms and values of the primary schools in which they were being integrated).

Furthermore, Tinto (1993; 1975) states that student's goals and commitments, along with their pre-entry attributes, are brought to the institutional setting where they interact with institutional experiences (Morris, 2002). These institutional experiences are divided into two: academic and social experiences (Tinto, 1993; 1975).

For Tinto (1993; 1975), academic integration constitutes academic performance which relates to the grade/mark performance, students' private judgement on the worth or value of what they are learning as opposed to teachers' judgement (subjects which learners are enjoying in relation to methods used when teaching these subjects). Furthermore, academic integration is concerned with how learners identify themselves with academic norms and values (Tinto, 1993; 1975). In view of this Gaunke & Woosley (2005) contend that without academic integration students begin to disengage themselves from the school activities. This clearly shows that academic performance is very important in order for learners to be successfully integrated in the new institution.

Furthermore, Tinto (1993; 1975) regards social integration in relation to how learners fit into the dominant social crowd, how they interact with fellow learners from new institutional environment, their personal contact with academic staff and what is making them enjoy being at the new institution. Factors constituting social integration include learners' involvement in extra-curricular activities, informal peer-group interactions and interaction with their teachers, (Tinto, 1993). On social integration and persistence of students in school, Astin (1984) also found that students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that involve them as valued members of the institution. In support of Tinto (1993; 1975) and Astin (1984), other studies have also shown that peers are the most single source of social integration and failure to broaden peer-group interaction or social networks may lead to students experience feelings of isolation or alienation which may become a barrier to educational persistence (Gardner, 2005 Watson, et al., 2002, Thomas, 2000; Tellis, 1997). In other words, Gardner (2005) clearly points out that in and out-of-the classroom experiences are some of critical factors that would facilitate social integration. In view of this, these factors: extra-curricular activities, informal peer-group interactions and interaction with their teachers, were considered in this study with the aim of finding out the social integration experiences of CBE graduates in formal primary schools they have rejoined.

Thus, the student's academic and social experiences in their new learning institution can have positive or negative impact of student retention in or departure from the school. More positive experiences strengthen the student's decision to remain at the institution while where they are more negative experiences, a student's goals and commitments tend to be weakened and the student is less likely to remain in the institution (Tinto, 1993). This means the decision to stay or to depart is the final stage and it is labelled as outcome of the interaction between the pre-entry attributes of the student and those of the new institution (Morris, 2002).

It is at this point that the student leaves or continues learning at a particular institution of higher education (Tinto (1993). As such, whether a student departs from an institution or remains “is largely a result of the extent to which the student becomes academically and socially connected with the new institution,” (Morris, 2002, p. 3). Basing on what was stated earlier on, some studies have proposed the need for broadening the application of Tinto’s theories of student retention and departure to other contexts, this study therefore endeavoured to explore experiences of learners from CBE as they integrated in primary schools in Chikhwawa district.

However, Tinto’s theories were used to explain integration of minorities in White communities in America and were applied to students from colleges and universities. Other scholars have criticised these theories for this reason and also as their report are based on weak and inconsistent evidence, which is, not based on controlled experiments (Braxton & Hirschy, 2005). Despite these criticisms, Morris, (2002, p. 5) earlier on contended that, “in several major studies (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1980; Terenzini, Lorang, & Pascarella, 1981; Getzlaf, Sedlacek, Kearney, & Blackwell, 1984), Tinto's constructs of academic integration, social integration and goal and institutional commitment have been found to significantly predict student retention at four-year residential institutions.” Other studies have also produced results that are highly supportive of the major constructs and casual linkages in the model (Terenzeni, Pascarella, Theophilides, & Lorang, 1985).

Draper, (2010) proposes that the application of Tinto’s theory of student retention and departure be broadened to other contexts. It was for this reasoning that the logic of this theory was borrowed and applied in this study to analyse and explain the experiences of learners from CBE as they rejoin and integrate into formal primary schools in Chikhwawa district.

The two theories have been applied in this study because successful integration leads to student retention where as unsuccessful retention leads to student departure. Fullan, (1999), earlier on stated that uniqueness of the individual setting is crucial factor in a change, what works in one situation may or may not work in another. The two theories were used in order to also find out if their propositions would work in a different setting like primary schools. The thinking is that research findings on the change process should be used less as instruments of application and more as means of helping practitioners and planners make sense of planning implementation and monitoring strategies (Fullan, 1999).

This study has focused on the academic and social experiences of the first cohort of CBE learners who have just rejoined formal primary schools in Chikhwawa district. The CBE programme stipulates that CBE graduates should rejoin primary school in Standard Six. By exploring their experiences, this study has explored how many of these learners are still in school. It is with this understanding that this study employed Tinto's theory of student retention and departure as a theoretical frame work to analyse and theorise the academic and social integrative experiences of learners from CBE schools as they integrate into formal primary schools. Understanding their pre-entry attributes was necessary because interaction between these and the academic and social of their new institutions "could either lead to positive (integrative) experiences that heighten intentions and commitments to the institution, or lead to negative (mal-integrative) experiences that weaken intentions and commitment to the institution," (Morris, 2002, p. 2).

In general, the theory of student retention and departure (Tinto, 1993; 1975) stresses that successful and or unsuccessful integration of students is determined by both academic and social integrative experiences of a student in a new institution. Academic integrative experiences include learners' intellectual development and performance in class (grade) and social integration encompasses learners' interactive experiences with fellow learners and teachers. In view of this, the study has explored integration experiences of CBE learners into primary schools along the research key question as stated in Chapter 1.4.

2.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has contextualised the study within a relevant body of literature on CBE by highlighting the main trends, themes and issues in this field. The argument is that CBE is one of the initiatives taken by developing countries to address the problem of out-of-school youths. Where it has been successful, such youths have been integrated into formal schooling. It has also been argued that CBE being implemented in Malawi started as pilot project and Chikhwawa is one of the pilot districts. The review has highlighted the problem of out-of-school youth globally and in Malawi. It has also discussed EFA and NFE as attempts to reduce this problem. CBE as a new approach to addressing the problem of out-of-school youth has been described together with CBE characteristics and examples. This has been followed by Malawi's experience with CBE, ending with a description and justification of Tinto's theory of student retention and departure as the study's theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes and justifies the research design and methodology employed to explore the experiences of learners from CBE during their integration into formal primary schools in Chikhwawa district. The sample and sampling procedures are described including data collection methods, instruments and data analysis techniques used.

3.2 Research design

This study followed a mixed methodological approach by employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) as quoted by Maree (2009, p. 39) states that a:

Mixed methodological approach helps the researcher to check the extent to which conclusions based on qualitative sources are supported by quantitative perspective and vice versa.

Thus, findings on the lived experiences of learners from CBE rejoining formal primary schools, head teachers and teachers of formal primary schools, the CBE Coordinator for Chikhwawa District and the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) for Nsenjere zone, were supported by quantitative data on the performance of the CBE graduates being integrated into formal primary schools. This is called a *triangulation mixed research design* (Maree, 2009). In this research design, “the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection and analysis in order to best understand the phenomenon of interest” (Maree, 2009, p. 266).

On the one hand, the study involved producing qualitative data regarding experiences of learners from CBE being integrated into formal primary schools, of teachers and head teachers handling learners from CBE, and of the PEA and the CBE District Coordinator. On the other hand, quantitative data on learners' performance was obtained using their class test results which were quantified and computed into descriptive statistics such as the class mean score and the individual learner mean score (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3 in Chapter 4).

However, this design has its limitations as Maree (2009, p. 267) contends that "it becomes difficult for the researcher to draw conclusions if the results of the two data sets do not agree". Despite that a mixed method design has been supported by several authors because where the results of the two data sets agree, the study's findings help to produce well-validated and substantiated conclusions (Denzin, 2005; Merriam, 1988; Creswell, 2009; Maree, 2009). It should be pointed out that a large proportion of the data was qualitative while the quantitative data formed a small proportion because it was only on the learners' class test performance but the qualitative data involved views of the learners from CBE, head teachers and teachers of schools where learners from CBE were being integrated, the Primary Education Advisor (PEA), and the District CBE Coordinator.

3.3 Phenomenological Methodology

The study employed a phenomenology as its methodology (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), to explore the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE being integrated in formal primary schools as one way of reducing the problem of out-of-school children and youth in Malawi. It is argued in this study that the fundamental concern of phenomenology is to explore "how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as a shared meaning" (Patton, 2002, p.

104). Thus, phenomenology seeks to explore the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a particular person or group of people (Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1990). It helps to illuminate how research participants perceive a social phenomenon, “describe it, feel about it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). Methodologically, this requires a careful and thorough description of how people experience a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). In addition, Pollio, Henley & Thompson (1997) observe that:

In general, phenomenological inquiry is concerned with understanding how people’s subjective world is constituted and how people come to interpret their actions and those of others.

Furthermore, it is argued that for phenomenology, it is impossible to measure objectively any aspect of human or social behaviour (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991). This impossibility is due to the fact that people, as social actors, make sense of (interpret) the world by categorizing it. Through language, they distinguish between different types of events, actions, objects, and people. They make and express meaning about the events in their social world (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991). It was for this reason that the study was located within an interpretivist paradigm. In particular, the study explored the experiences of learners from CBE during their integration into formal primary schools. It sought to illuminate and cross-examine the essence of such experiences

Commenting on the justification for a phenomenological methodology, Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler (2006, p. 271), observe that:

Wanting to understand the human experience and how experiences are interpreted differently by different people would certainly be an appropriate reason to conduct a phenomenological study.

The process of categorizing the world is subjective since it depends on the opinions of the observer. As such, the most that phenomenology can do is to understand the meaning that individuals give to particular phenomena. “The end product of phenomenological research is an understanding of the meanings employed by members of the society in their everyday life” (Haralambos & Holborn, 1991, p. 20). It is for this reason that this methodology was employed in exploring the experiences of learners from CBE during their integration into formal primary schools.

3.4 Sampling procedures and data collection methods

The study was conducted in 4 formal primary schools that enrolled learners from CBE located in Boma and Mbewe zones in Chikhwawa District. The district was purposively sampled as one of the three districts that participated in the pilot phase of CBE from 2006 to 2008 before CBE became a programme for the whole Malawi. Chikhwawa was also purposively selected because it was the only district in the southern region of Malawi that participated in the pilot phase of CBE. Furthermore, the researcher was based in the same region so it was sampled for easy access and travel conveniences for the researcher.

Sampling involves selection of the specific research contexts and participants from the entire population, and is “conducted in different ways according to the type of study” (Blanche et al., 2007, p. 564). This study used a sample of four formal primary schools in Chikhwawa district. The four schools were chosen on the basis that they were integrating learners from CBE which was a unique feature for those schools to be purposively sampled among other primary schools in that district. There were five schools in total that were integrating learners from CBE schools in Chikhwawa district, as such, the selected schools were only those that

had more than two learners from CBE schools. The aim was to solicit views from a wide range of learners as regards academic and social experiences, as they were being integrated into formal schooling from CBE schools.

The study had a sample of 189 participants. Out of this number, 21 were learners who had rejoined formal primary from CBE while 158 were regular learners. From this number there were also 4 teachers, 4 head teachers from the 4 targeted schools, the CBE coordinator for Chikhwawa district and a PEA. The initial intention was to target all Standard 6 pupils and their respective teachers in the four targeted schools. This was because the CBE policy stipulates that learners from CBE rejoining formal primary schools should be placed in Standard 6 (MoEST, 2008).

However, as a result of poor communication of the integration process to the teachers and head teachers (as discussed in Chapter 4), such learners were placed in the classes to which they originally belonged before dropping out. As such, instead of targeting Standard 6 learners only, the study changed its course and considered any class where learners from CBE had been placed after rejoining formal primary schools. As such purposive sampling of classes which composed of regular and learners from CBE was done.

Worth to note was that learners from CBE were found in different classes in the four targeted schools. For instance at one school, these learners were found in Standard 4, at another school they were found in Standards; 4-6, whereas at another school, learners from CBE were found in Standard 6 and at the other school, these learners were found in Standard 7. All learners from these classes were used in one way or another; this is because their population is small.

Furthermore, instead of focusing on learners from CBE only, the study involved all learners in the classes in which learners from CBE were placed. This was only with regard to group performance in class. The point here was to compare the academic performance of learners from CBE with those of the regular learners. Commenting on the importance of purposive sampling, Neuman (2006) observes that it involves selecting appropriate and unique cases or members of a population that are especially informative.

Initially the study also intended to examine how learners CBE were performing in classes at the four targeted schools, as compared to the performance of regular learners. However, this arrangement did not materialize because at one of the targeted schools, the class which had learners from CBE was being handled by a care-taker teacher since the owner of the class was on maternity leave. As a result, the care-taker teacher did not have the performance record books or class test results at the time of the study which were crucial for performance analysis. The remaining three schools were thus purposively sampled for performance record review or comparison of test results between learners from CBE and regular learners. Thus, for comparison of learners' performance, only three schools were involved as shown in Table 3.1 in the next page with a total of 158 regular learners and 15 learners being integrated from CBE. But for the FGDs, all the four targeted schools were used.

Table 3:1 No of learners whose performance results were used in this study

TYPE OF LEARNERS	SCHOOL	TOTAL NO.	SEX		AGE RANGE		CLASS
			F	M	F	M	
CBE	1	2	1	1	12	13	STD 4
	2	10	2	8	15-16	15-16	STD 6
	3	3	1	2	15	17-19	STD 7
REGULAR	1	45	20	25	10-16	12-17	STD 4
	2	73	36	37	11-17	11-17	STD 6
	3	40	18	22	12-17	13-19	STD 7

Fifteen learners from CBE schools and 158 regular learners from the three schools were also purposively sampled to provide data on group performance as shown on table 3.1 above. The aim was to compare the performance of learners from CBE and that of the regular learners. Raw scores for both learners from CBE and regular learners for third term in targeted classes in formal primary school classes were collected to find academic experiences in three subjects: Chichewa, English and Mathematics in Chikhwawa district. These subjects were considered because most studies on successes of CBE approaches stress that graduates from such schools are competent in literacy and numeracy skills (Hoppers, 2005; 2006; Moore *et*

al., 2005; Hartwell, 2006; DeStefano et al., 2007; Hayford & Ghartey, 2007; Farrell & Hartwell, 2006). Data on academic integration was also collected during FDGs through a question about subjects they enjoyed learning at the primary school.

Document analysis was done of the class test scores from end of year (2009-2010) tests which the class teachers had already administered. The tests were not a pre-arrangement between the researcher and the class teachers. This was done in order to obtain results that would give a true reflection about academic performance of the learners from CBE as compared to that of the regular learners in a normal setting. Using SPSS the mean score was produced as a descriptive statistic of the performance for each group in the three subjects, namely English, Chichewa and Mathematics, as presented in Chapter 4, Table 4.1.

In addition, four focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with learners in the four schools. The FGDs only involved those learners who had rejoined formal primary schools from CBE. Participants to take part in the FGDs were sampled using census approach. The census approach is “commonly used in cases where population sizes are small” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008, p. 391). The number of participants in FGDs differed from one school to another depending on the number of learners that were present on the day the FGD was conducted. Thus, the number of participants for the FGDs ranged from 4 to 6. Membership of the FGDs was heterogeneous in the sense that the learners came from different classes ranging from standards 4 to 7 as shown in Table 3.2 below. An interview guide for the FGDs was used, see appendix 2.

Table 3.2 Number of learner-participants in FGDs per school

School	Number of Learners from CBE in the FGD
1	5
2	6
3	4
4	6

A focus group is typically a group of people who share a similar type of experience but not naturally constituted as an existing social group (Blanche et al. 2007, p. 304, Sarantakos, 2005, p. 194). Sarantakos (2005, p. 196) observes that “group discussion offers access to the construction of meanings while participants interact with each other within the group.” In this study, learners from CBE have been treated as a group with similar experiences from CBE schools.

In addition, one class teacher in each of the four schools was also purposively selected on the basis that they were teaching learners who had rejoined formal primary schools from CBE in specific classes. There were other teachers in the schools who were not teaching these learners following how primary system operates in Malawi. Mostly, each teacher is assigned a full class to handle it alone. As such teachers who were allocated to classes in which learners from CBE were being integrated were deemed to be a rich source of information on the experiences of such learners during their integrating into formal primary schooling. Purposive sampling on selecting teachers was treated as an ideal sampling procedure because

schools that were integrating learners from CBE schools in Chikhwawa district were very few and the learners from CBE were not found in all classes. Therefore involving all of the teachers who were teaching classes where learners from CBE were being integrated, was meant to bring about rich data on teachers experiences in handling learners from CBE schools. Individual oral interviews were conducted and tape-recorded with each class teacher. An interview guide with seven open-ended questions was used (see appendix 3).

Another category of research participants involved 4 head teachers for the 4 targeted primary schools. They expressed what they had learnt in handling these learners in their schools, the support which they provided to learners, and the factors that they felt facilitated or acted against integration of the learners into formal primary schools. An open-ended structured questionnaire was administered to those head teachers (see appendix 4). This was done because open as opposed to close-ended questionnaires allow more freedom of response (Sarantakos, 2005; Fraenkel, & Wallen 2008).

A third category of research participants comprised the District CBE Coordinator for Chikhwawa and the PEA. These two officers were responsible for monitoring the implementation of the CBE programme in Chikhwawa district. Both the PEA and CBE District Coordinator were selected to express their views concerning the experiences of learners from CBE as they integrated in primary schools. They were also involved in order to provide information on the support which they were giving to these learners if any, during their integration into formal primary schools as they were representatives of service providers and Ministry of Education respectively. Individual oral interviews were conducted with each one of them using an interview guide with open-ended questions (see appendix 5 and 6).

The questions in all interview guides for the FGDs with learners and face to face interviews with class teachers, CBE District Coordinator, the PEA, were framed using factors that Tinto (1975 and 1993) and other education researchers identified as influencing both academic and social integration as discussed in chapter 2.5. This also applied to how questions on the head teachers' questionnaire were constructed.

Furthermore, a review was done of available documents and materials on the background of CBE in Malawi. The aim was to get an understanding of the implementation of the CBE programme since it started in 2006 as discussed in Chapter 2. The documents included CBE Concept Note; Policy documents such as National Education Sector Plan (NESP) Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP). Papers, Articles and Related Studies at international and national levels were also reviewed. In addition, assessment records for 2009-2010 academic year were reviewed for Chichewa, English and Mathematics. This was done to solicit quantitative data on the performance of learners from CBE schools as compared to the performance of the regular learners. Academic performance is one of the indicators of academic integration that may also lead to learner persistence in a new institution (Tinto, 1993).

3.5 Data analysis

Data analysis issues are to be carefully considered when designing a study, since the aim of data analysis is to transform information (data) into an answer to the original research question, based on the purpose of the research and the research paradigm (Blanche et al., 2007). In this view, the analysis for qualitative data was done following the procedure recommended by Creswell (2005).

Firstly, there was familiarisation and organisation of the data that was collected. This step involved reading and re-reading the field notes collected during FGDs with pupils, transcripts of oral interviews with teachers, the PEA and the District CBE Coordinator.

Secondly, the data was coded. According to Creswell (2005, p. 251), “coding refers to a process of segmenting and labelling text to form descriptions and broad themes in the data.” During this stage codes were generated which were used to come with categories and patterns on the experiences of learners from CBE being integrated into formal primary schools. The third stage involved using the categories and the patterns to generate. The themes are presented as the findings of the study in Chapter 4 with data extracts supporting them.

For the quantitative data on the performance of learners SPSS was used to compute test scores and come up with the group mean scores as descriptive statistics which were used to compare the group performance of learners from CBE and that of the regular learners.

3.6 Pilot testing

The questionnaire for the head teachers, the interview guide for the class teachers and FGD guides for the learners were piloted in one of the schools that were integrating learners from CBE in Chikhwawa district. This was done in order to identify potential inconsistencies, gaps, repetitions, or flaws in the data collection instruments (Blanche et al., 2007). For instance, the expressions ‘relate with’ and ‘militate against’ in the questionnaire and interview guide confused participants during piloting which were used in the following questions: How do you relate with regular learners in your class? What factors facilitate or militate against successful integration of learners from CBE into primary schools? As a result, the expressions were changed to ‘work with’ instead of ‘relate, and ‘act against’ instead of ‘militate against’.

In addition, the interview guide for the CBE District Coordinator was piloted with the Ntchisi District CBE Coordinator. This was because the CBE District Coordinator for Chikhwawa was to be used as participant in the main research. Here no changes were made since the questions were clear. For the, PEA, the interview guide was piloted with the PEA of Mbewe Zone in Chikhwawa. Again no changes were made to the interview guide as the questions were clear.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of the data collection process, I got a letter of introduction from the Head of Department of the Faculty of Education and Foundation Studies at Chancellor College (see appendix 1). Thereafter, permission to conduct research in primary schools in Chikhwawa district was sought from the Ministry of Education headquarters. Permission was also obtained from the Manager of South West Education Division in which Chikhwawa district is found as well as from the District Education Manager (DEM) for Chikhwawa District (DEM). The DEM for Chikhwawa then informed the head teachers in the targeted schools and also introduced me to the CBE Coordinator in Chikhwawa and the Primary Education Advisor for Nsenjere Zone who was responsible for monitoring CBE activities in Chikhwawa District. For the learners, permission was obtained from their head teachers and class teachers. They were also informed that they were not being forced to participate in the study but that their participation would help to produce knowledge to be used in improving the implementation of the CBE programme.

The right of the participants to decide anonymously whether they would be involved in the research endeavour need to be respected (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). In view of this, all identified participants who took part in the study upon agreement and signing of forms of consent. Precaution was also made with the aim of respecting the privacy, confidentiality and

anonymity of the research participants and minimizing the impact of the study on their mental and physical integrity (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). Code names instead of participants' real names were used in representing data extracts supporting the themes. For instance; the participants in the four FGDs codes ranging from FGD-1 to FGD-4 were used. Oral interviews with four class teachers codes CTI-1 to CTI-4 were used, for head teacher who participated in filling the questionnaires, codes HTQ-1 to HTQ-4 have been used. Lastly, codes Officer-1 and Officer-2 were used to represent the CBE District Coordinator and Primary Education Advisor respectively.

Furthermore, to enhance the study's credibility and trustworthiness, triangulation of sources of data was done by involving different categories of research participants namely learners, head teachers, class teachers, the PEA, and the District CBE Coordinator. The data from these sources was complemented with quantitative data on the performance of learners through Document analysis.

3.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has described both the qualitative and quantitative methods that were used to collect data. The methods employed included focus group discussions with learners from CBE. Face to face oral interviews with teachers from Standards 4, 5, 6 and 7, the PEA and the District CBE Coordinator in Chikhwawa District were also used. A questionnaire was also administered to head teachers in the 4 targeted primary schools, and there was also a review of raw scores of end of year (2009-2010) test results for all learners (CBE and Regular) in the targeted classes. Through thematic analysis, codes were identified from which categories were developed. From the categories themes were generated, emerging from the qualitative data. The raw scores were computed using SPSS package through which descriptive statistics were generated and tables were drawn to compare performance of learners from CBE to that of Regular learners for the quantitative data.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses findings of this study using the logic of Tinto's (1993; 1975) theory of student retention and departure as its theoretical framework. This theory states that whether a student persists or drops out of the institution is quite predicted by his /her degree of academic and social integration. This implies that if learners are to be successfully integrated in the new institution there should positive interaction between learners' pre-entry attributes and academic and social characteristics of that new institution as discussed in chapter 2.

The findings are presented based on the research questions. The first question focussed on the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE during their integration into the primary schools. The second question dealt with lessons which primary schools teachers and head teachers had learnt when handling learners from CBE. The third question focussed on the help that service providers, the PEA, and primary school administration provided to learners from CBE once they rejoined formal primary school for them to seamlessly integrate in those schools. The last question sought to understand factors that facilitated or acted against successful integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools.

4.2 Experiences of learners from CBE as they integrate into primary schools

According to Tinto (1975), a student is successfully integrated if he/she fits well in the academic and social structures of the new institution. One of the subsidiary questions of this study sought to explore the academic and social integrative experiences of learners from CBE who are being integrated into primary schools in Chikhwawa district. These experiences are discussed in chapter 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 respectively.

4. 2. 1 Academic experience of learners from CBE in the primary schools

In this section pre-entry attributes of learners; interaction among learners from CBE and regular learners; and interaction with their teachers in academic issues are presented in this section. In addition, there is a discussion on school structures such as libraries regarding how they were viewed to promote academic integration and also influences performance of the learners.

Pre-entry attributes of learners from CBE

This study established that one academic experience of the learners from CBE schools as they integrate in formal schooling in Chikhwawa district was that these learners have sound pre-entry attributes. These pre-entry attributes include: literacy and numeracy skills which they acquired from school CBE. Through knowledge and skills which the learners acquired at CBE schools in subjects: such as *Chichewa*, *English* and *Mathematics*, they were able to understand what was being taught when learning these subjects in the formal primary school classes without difficulties. This is an important factor which helped them to successfully integrate into formal primary schools. For instance, in one of the focus group discussions (FGDs), one learner said:

Kunoku ku pulayimale amatituza kuti yeserani kaye ndiye chifukwa chakuti ndidaziphunzirako kale ndili ku CBEko n`tabwera konkuno sindidachione ngati kuti ndi chovuta chifukwa chakuti m`dalinazo kale. Ndiye ndi mangokhala ngati ndimangozinena ndiye anzanganso amadabwa. Pa chifukwa icho ndiye ndimathandizana nawonso anzanga kuti izi ndi izi, izi ndi izi (Here at primary school we are told to practise but I learned the material before while at CBE. So here I do not face any difficulties because I

do have some notes from CBE. I just read and this surprises my friends in class. Because of that we assist each other on many things). (FGD 2, 16/07/2010).

The above observation shows that learners' pre-entry attributes (knowledge and skills) which they acquired from CBE schools made them integrate into formal primary schools successfully. As pointed out by Tinto's (1993) if learners' prior schooling knowledge and skills intermingle well with the new institution's characteristics, the learners will be academically, integrated smoothly. As such, this will facilitate their persistence in school. Commenting on the academic experience, another learner also said:

Chimene chimachitika ndichakuti ndikaona kuti aphunzitsi atipasa kantchito kovuta koti tipange pazomwe tikuphunzira kunoko, ndimakaonanso zomwe tidaphunzira kuja ku sukulu ya a buthu [CBE]. Ndimathanso kuwathandiza anzanga omwe tinawapeza kunoko (What happens is that if I find some problems working on a task which our teacher has given us on the subjects which we are learning here at primary school, I go back and refer to the notes which we were given at CBE School. I even help my friends not only those I were with at CBE but even those that we have found here). (FGD 3, 17/07/20010).

Reflecting on the match between the work that was done at CBE schools and that in the formal primary school, one learner had this to say:

Kwa ineyo ndi chimodzimidzi. Makope amene tinkaphunzira kumene kujako simnataye. Ndili nawo. Ndikangoona chili chonse chovuta konkuno, ndimapita kukayang`ana kuti kuja adatiphunzitsa chakuti chakuti. Ndiye ndimakafufuza mmakope chifukwa simdataye ndikayang`ana, ndikachiona

chinthu chija kuti kodi timapanga bwanji aa timachipanga chonchi, ndiye timalemba Monga kwa ineyo ndidasungirako kope lina lamasamu ndili nalo ndithu. Ndizoti Zimene timaphunzira ifeyo ku mbali ya masamu monga obtuse angle ndi zoti ma definition ake ndimatha kunena kuti imakhala mwakutimwakuti. Komanso za maReflex ndimatha bwinobwino chifukwa chonena kuti notes zake ndidakalinazo zochoka nazo ku CBE. ndili nazo ndithu bwinobwino (In my case, I had kept all the notebooks of things that we were learning at CBE. When I find something difficult I check in those notebooks to see how we were solving such problems I have kept a Mathematics exercise book and what I had learned especially about obtuse angles, I am able to provide the definition; such as giving the definition of a Reflex angle I am able to explain them well because I have notes on them from CBE.) (FGD 4; 19/07/10).

Another learner from the same FGD said:

Aaa! Monga kwa ineyo pambali pa masamu, komanso English ndi Chichewa ndi maphunziro oti sandiopsa kwenikweni. Maphunziro awiriwa siovuta kwa ine. Ndimatha kuchita spell mawu ena mosavuta monga momwe ananera mnzangayu akatifunsa kuti tiyesere timakhoza bwinobwino (Ah! Besides mathematics, there are other subjects that I find not scaring in my eyes like English, Chichewa. These two subjects are not difficult to me. I am able to spell some words without difficulties. Just as my friend was saying; if we are asked to try, we are able to perform better) (FGD 4; 19/07/10).

It can be noted here that the learners acknowledged that the level of knowledge and skills acquired in the CBE schools enabled them to integrate easily into the formal primary schools. This resonates with Tinto's (1993) assertion that if the pre-entry attributes of a learner match those of the new institution, the student is likely to persist with learning.

However, the study also found out that there are some subjects that are offered in formal primary schools which those learners did not learn as they were not offered at CBE schools. The subjects included *Bible Knowledge, Life skills, Social and Environmental Sciences*. As such, they found problems to understand these new subjects in class. These subjects were giving problems to the learners from CBE because they did not have prior knowledge. For instance, during FGDs some learners commented as follows:

Ineyo zimandivuta ndi B/K ndi Social (For me, difficult subjects are B/K and Social (FGD 1, 14/07/10).

Another learner observed that:

Aa, monga kumbali ya ineyo ndimayesetsa kuti nanga sizonena kuti Sitandade 5 sitinaphunzire Social and Environmental Sciences ndi B/K ndiye ndimabwereka notsi kwa anzanga kuti ndikope kuti mwina mwake ndikafatsa ndiziwerega kuti ndizizimvetsa (Ah, in my case I try hard you know that we did not not learn in Standard 5, as a result we do not have knowledge of subjects such as Social and Environmental Sciences and B/K. I therefore ask my colleagues to borrow me notes of these subject so that I should copy and read during my free time in order to understand them. 19/07/2012).

These views by the learners point some areas that can be improved in the provision of CBE in Malawi, so that integration into formal primary schools does not present difficulties to the learners. It should be observed that, the CBE does not offer all the subjects that are offered in formal primary schools. Subjects that it offers include: *English, Mathematics, Chichewa, Umbadwa (Citizenship), Kukhala Wathanzi (Health Living)* and *Ntchito Zothandiza pa Umoyo Wathu (entrepreneurship)*. Some of these learning areas are found in *Social and Environmental Sciences* in the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR). *Social and Environmental Sciences* is one of the subjects which learners from CBE said were new to them in primary schools.

However, much emphasis is put on *Chichewa* as the official mother tongue in Malawi, *English* as the official language and medium of instruction, *Mathematics, Citizenship* and *entrepreneurship*. Mostly the subjects that are offered at CBE are subjects that would promote life-long learning and self-reliance among its graduates. As noted in chapter 2, section 2.3 CBE models follow reduced calendars of formal curriculum; exclusion of the other subjects could be due to the condensation of CBE curriculum. In the case of Malawi the work for grades (Standards) 1 to 5 is covered in three years only.

Interaction between learners from CBE and regular learners on academic issues

The study found that level of academic interaction between learners from CBE schools and regular learners in the four targeted schools, to some extent differed. It was observed that there was good interaction between learners from CBE and regular learners in three of the four targeted primary schools where these learners were being integrated. Responses obtained from FGDs indicated that whenever these learners had problems on academic issues, they

would ask and help one another. It was also indicated that in view of the fact that learners from CBE schools and regular learners in formal primary schools came from same villages, they did not treat each other as strangers as cited by one of participants during FGD 3 who said:

Monga kwa ineyo monga mukudziwa kuti sitandade 5 sindidaphunzire, ndiye ndimauza azinzanga kuti andibwereke notsi kuti ndikope mmakope mwanga kuti ndiziwerenga kuti ndizizimvetsa amatibwereka makope popanda vuto lina lililonse. (In my case, I try you know that I did not learn in Standard 5, I do ask my friends to lend me their notes so that I copy them in my exercise book in order that I study them on my own so that I understand the things and they do lend us without problems). (FGD 3, 16/07/2011).

This shows that that there was good relationship between learners from CBE and regular learners in their respective classes.

However, at one of the targeted schools, interaction between learners from CBE schools and regular learners was not good. Commenting on this, one learner during one of the FGDs said that:

Tikawafunsa kuti atithandize amanene kuti aliyense ayendere yake ndiye ifenso akatifunsa sitimaathandiza (When we ask them to help us where we have problems they say mind your own business, so when they ask us to help them we also refuse) (FGD 2, 16/07/2010).

On the same poor interaction, another learner also said:

Aa nthawi zina timayesera koma zikamakanika poti mumadziwa anthu ndi osiyana ena amatiuza kuti sovani, pangani nokha. Aliyense adabwera yekha kuno. Koma nthawi zina amatithandiza aphunzitsi pakakhala kuti zina zativuta. Aphunzitsi amatiuza momwe tingalembere ndiye timalembano tokha. (Aa, sometimes we try but when we have failed we ask our friends but you know people are different. Some tell us to do the work on our own because each one came here alone. And sometimes we do get assistance from our teachers when we have difficulties. The teachers tell us how to go about the problem and we go and solve it ourselves (FGD 2, 16/07/2010).

The above views show a mixture of academic experiences that learners rejoining formal primary schools got from regular learners. Some of the regular learners showed willingness to work with or assist learners being integrated into formal primary schools in Chikhwawa while others were not. This establishment reflects that classroom experiences are fundamental to students' institutional experiences and are instrumental in promoting academic integration.

Teacher's individual help on academic problems

The study had also established that one academic experience which was valued by learners from CBE was that teachers at primary schools where they were being integrated offered individual assistance. It was noted the learners liked the fact whenever they had problems to workout tasks in class their teachers gave them individual help. Responses from all FGDs indicated that sometimes class teachers could call any learner, whether those coming from CBE or regular learners to the staffroom after classes or during their free time to help him/her

when he/she had any academic problem. Commenting on the issue of individual help given by teachers, one learner said that:

Monga ineyo ngati sindinamvetsetse masamu ndimafunsa kuti abwereze kuti ndimvetsetse akandiuza kuti upange mwakuti mwakuti ndiye ndimasovanso komanso aphunzitsi athu amanena kuti amene zikumvuta ndipeze ku ofesi kapena kunyumba tikaweruka. Ndiye timatha kupita ndikukawapeza ee. Ndiye amatithandiza kuti vuto limeneli ukhoza kusova mwakutimwakuti. (Like in my case, if I haven't understood, say for example mathematics, I ask the teacher to demonstrate again for me to understand better. After demonstrating and being told how to do it I work it over again. Sometimes our teachers tell us that anyone who has some problems should see him in the office or at his home after classes. So we do that and he helps us to solve any problem which one of us may have (FGD 3, 15/07/2010).

Furthermore, on the same issue, one of the class teachers had this to say:

After I had seen that some learners from CBE and other regular learners were finding problems in some subjects such as Life Skills, English and Social and Environmental Sciences, because I treat these learners equally, I discussed with the head teacher that I should be conducting remedial classes during some days of the week. The head teacher allowed me to be doing that and I do conduct these remedial lessons (CTI 4, 19/07/2010).

The above observation suggests that support that learners got from fellow learners and their teachers in the primary schools where they were being integrated played a greater role in promoting their academic integration. Individual academic help given by teachers to learners

is one form of such support which should be encouraged for the successful academic integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools. Learners who were not getting academic support from their fellow learners and teachers in their respective classes felt disengaged. This reflects to what Tinto (1993) observes that institutional experiences such as interaction between the staff and learners who are being integrated in a new institution leads to either positive experiences that help to integrate or negative experiences that isolate a student into the intellectual community.

Use of library

Another finding of this study was that use of library at one of the schools that participated in this study facilitated academic integration of learners from CBE at that particular school. Access to library was cherished by those learners because they did not have such kind of facility at the CBE schools. Those learners expressed happiness to be part of that school because, apart from class work, they were also able to access books from the school library where they read interesting stories. In addition access to the library also helped them to get information which they applied in class. One of the learners who were in Standard 7 at that school said the following during the FGDs:

Pena pake timati tikapanga break timatha kupita ku Library kukapezako mwina timabuku tina ndi tina. Mwinanso pena tinangoona kankhani kena kake timatha mwina kukapemphako kwa aphunzitsi kuti ayi ine ndima funako ku Library kuti ndikapezako buku lakuti lakuti. Ndiye amatha kutipatsa pamene kuja ku CBE kunalibe Library. (Sometimes when we are on break period we go and borrow some books in the library. Sometimes we ask our teachers to let us use the library when we see that there is a story we would like to read in the library. Our teachers allow us to use the library but there was no library at CBE) (FGD 4, 19/07/2010).

One insight from this view could be that if all formal primary schools had libraries, they would promote academic integration and increase their potential in attracting and possibly retaining learners rejoining schooling from CBE. It is suggested here that this one area of academic experience demonstrates a mismatch between the pre-entry attributes from CBE and the academic experiences in some formal primary schools. This an authentication that learners from CBE schools did not have prior knowledge of libraries which could be in the category of *pre-entry attributes* as described by Tinto (1993). However, this mismatch aroused the curiosity of learners to view formal school life as interesting. As it is observed here, library facilities would act as a source of magnetism for learners from CBE programme to continue their education if they were found in all primary schools that were integrating those learners.

Performance of learners from CBE as compared to that of regular learners

Additionally, this study has also established that performance in terms of grades for the majority of learners from CBE was reasonably good as compared to that of regular learners. As discussed earlier on Tinto (1993) observes that performance (the grade) influences academic integration. The responses obtained during face to face interviews with class teachers who were teaching learners from CBE schools in their classes, indicated that performance of learners who came from CBE was relatively; ranging from high to average. This was principally in subjects such as *Chichewa, English and Mathematics*. For instance, one of class teachers commented that:

In fact we appreciate what this CBE is doing because they are bringing let me just specify this, they are aa (laughing) cream they are bringing aa, good learners who we actually enjoy as we are teaching they even ask questions which means they are better compared to those who are starting standard 1

right away here at primary school, Yes, Yes. Even if you see the performance of the learners whom you interviewed, you can see that they are doing well talking of mathematics, talking of Chichewa and other subjects Yes. (CTI 3, 16/07/2010).

On the same issue another class teacher also commented that:

Some learners are doing better in Chichewa and Mathematics but some learners face some problems with English and this affects their performance in other subjects. You know that from Standard 5 up to 8 all subjects except Chichewa are taught in English. (CTI 2, 15/07 /2012).

In another interview with another class teacher, his Comment was that:

Unlike Regular learners those coming from CBE, they feel very free to ask questions during Chichewa Mats and English periods because there they are having a small group, they can ask questions as they are learning (CTI 1, 14/07/2010).

Yet another class teacher had this to say:

Aa, most of them are good at numeracy, only on the side of English, they have some problems more especially in their first time in Standard 6 and because of that problem I introduced afternoon classes, special for English like drilling in spellings. Yes, I did that in Standard 6, but now they are doing a bit fine (CTI 4, 19/07/2010).

One more insight here is that prior knowledge and skills in *Chichewa*, *English* and *Mathematics* which those learners brought with them from CBE schools interacted well with their academic experiences in primary schools.

Furthermore, it should be noted that apart from the observation of the class teachers on the academic performance of learners from CBE, an analysis on raw scores for end of term three results of 2009-2010 academic year, reflect a comparatively good performance in *Chichewa*, *English* and *Mathematics* by learners from CBE schools. The raw scores were computed to find mean scores for each group. A comparison of the CBE and Regular learners' group mean scores shows results as indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4:1 A Comparison table of group mean score of learners from CBE and regular learners

School Name	No. of learners	Type of Learners	Chichewa	English	Mathematics
School 1	45	Regular	59.33	51.00	49.80
		STDEV	11.06	15.76	13.40
	3	CBE	72.00	65.33	64.00
		STDEV	08.72	17.79	05.29
School 2	40	Regular	64.88	37.90	48.90
		STDEV	23.97	09.14	20.65
	2	CBE	83.00	69.00	53.12
		STDEV	18.39	29.70	16.26
School 3	73	Regular	73.41	43.40	54.52
		STDEV	18.15	15.00	21.32
	10	CBE	81.20	46.20	50.50
		STDEV	16.14	15.98	20.51

From Table 4.1, it can be observed that the broad spectrum of performance of CBE learners was by far and largely high in all the three schools. The CBE learners performed better than the regular ones in *Chichewa*, *English* and *Mathematics* at the three schools. It can be suggested that the pre-entry attributes from CBE schools and the academic experiences in the formal primary schools are harmonizing. This resonates with Tinto's (1993; 1975) proposition that positive interaction of learners' pre-entry attributes and academic experiences in the new institution augment performance. This in a way may work in favour of CBE's intention of integrating learners who complete the three-year cycle under this programme into formal primary schools.

Another rationalization for the high performance of learners from CBE schools could be that most of them were relatively older than the regular learners in the formal primary schools. This could trigger them to work hard and concentrate on their academic work seriously to do well in class. For those learners travelling long distances to school, the older one would do that with little fatigue unlike the regular learners who were relatively of young age. This also shows that age of learners as they rejoin a new institution may also affect their integration, corresponding with Tinto's (1993) that pre-entry attribute such as age is fundamental in process of integrating learners in a new institution.

However, at school 3 the performance of CBE learners was lower than the performance of the regular ones in Mathematics. This could suggest that there could be other factors apart from the match between pre-entry attributes and academic experiences. Actually the number of learners in school 3 was 83, as compared to the total number of learners in school 2 (48) and school 1 (42) learners only. In terms of the pupil/teacher ratios, these figures represent 83:1, 48:1 and 42:1 respectively. This could also illuminate a role pupil/teacher ratio played considering that at CBE schools this ratio is very small for instance 30:1, 40:1. The situation in school 3 demonstrates a negative interaction of prior experience in CBE schools where learners in one class could not exceed 40. This mismatch could therefore, deter academic integration of the CBE learners at this school.

4.2.2 Social integration

Another strand of Tinto's theory of student retention and departure (1975 and 1993) indicates that another determinant of successful integration is the degree to which a learner socially fits into the dominant norms and values of the new institution. Issues that exemplify social integration according to this theory is involvement of learners from a minority group into extra-curricular activities such as sporting activities and other games, clubs and societies and

how they interact with their friends and teachers. In line with this theory, this section presents and discusses findings on how learners from CBE were being integrated socially in primary schools in Chikhwawa district.

Extra-curricular activities

On social integration, the study found out that one of the factors that were promoting social integration among learners from CBE schools and regular learners in formal primary schools was their involvement in extra-curricular activities, explicitly football and netball games. Some of the learners from CBE were members of football and netball teams in their respective schools. Involvement in sporting activities was strengthening their sense of belonging and relationships among learners from CBE and regular learners. In this way the formal primary school curriculum showed an innovative approach towards education, thereby supporting child development in a holistic way as expressed by Kunz (2010) in Chapter 2.3.

2. During one focus group discussion, one of the learners said:

Kunoko kumandisangalatsira masewero a mpira monga mpira wa manja ndi miyendo (I like sporting activities here like netball and Football) (FGD 1, 14/07/10).

On the same involvement in sporting activities, another learner also commented that:

Aa! Ndimangosapotera ena akamasera mpira poti sindili mtimu komamumadziwa nthawi zina zinthu ngati zili bwino munthu umatha kusewera ndithu. Aphunzitsi athu amayesetsa komanso kutimbikitsa pa nkhani zosewra mpira. (I just support others when they are playing football or netball I am not in the team but as you know that when things are fine, one can play. Our teacher always gives a lot of support and encourages us on issues of sporting activities. FGD 3, 16/07/10).

The above views show that the learners from the CBE were able to integrate into the formal primary schools socially through their involvement in extra-curricular activities. The fact that condensed curriculum of CBE (as seen in chapter 2.3.1) did not provide for these sporting activities, these activities created a certain level of attraction and interest once the learners had rejoined formal primary schools. In congruence with learners opportunity to use a library facility at one of the targeted schools, extra-curricular activities had also proven to be some primary school experiences that facilitated social integration of learners in primary schools in Chikhwawa district. It can, therefore, be suggested here that a mismatch between pre-entry attributes of learners and those of the new institution may not necessarily lead to the learners' disengagement from the dominant culture of the new institution (primary schools, as Tinto's theory puts it. Doubtlessly, this can be described as positive mismatch, attracting learners into the primary schools.

Effects of participatory teaching and learning methods

This study had also established that the use of teaching and learning methods that are participatory in nature did not only enhance academic integration. Rather it also promoted social integration among learners from CBE in the schools they were being integrated. One of the participatory methods which teachers used were like group discussions and role play. This facilitated social interaction which also led to development and strengthening of social relationships among learners from CBE and regular learners as learners were discussing in their groups. This made them feel accepted in the formal schools they were being integrated. On this issue one of the class teachers commented that:

I usually do with them group work when I am teaching them and other things. So when they are working in their groups or pairs they interact even ask one another questions. I conduct group work with them to promote the relationship among these learners, (CTI 3, 16/07/2010).

This revelation gives an insight to teachers and school managers that use of participatory teaching and learning methodologies or approaches facilitates social integration of learners in a new institution. Hence this shows that some of the teachers' practices in the classrooms verified the fact that out that in and out-of-the classroom experiences are some of critical factors that facilitate social integration as observed by Tinto (1993; 1975) and Gardner (2005). In view if this, peer-group interactions and interaction with their teachers in classes have to be promoted by primary school teachers.

Break periods

In addition, the study had also observed that break periods were promoting social integration among learners from CBE schools and regular learners in the four targeted primary schools. Learners in the four FGDs said that at CBE schools there were no break periods. This was because of the shortened period of learning time at the CBE schools. As discussed in chapter 2, section 2.3, literature on CBE shows that time tables at CBE schools are reduced to three periods per day (Hartwell, 2006; Moore et al, 2005; DeStefano, 2006; DeStifano et al., 2007; Nampota & Moleni, 2007). This study has also established that at CBE schools learners were mostly learning three hours per day and sometimes less than three hours depending on how punctual they were for classes at a particular day. During one FGD, one learner commented that:

Kuno kumandisangalasa timachita break ndiye timakasewera ndi anzathu. (I like break periods here because I play with friend). (FGD 2, 15/07/10).

Another learner from another FGD also commented that:

Kunoko timachita break, timakadyanso zakudya zomwe tinatenga pochoka kunyumba (Here we go for break and have a chance to eat food which we brought from home). (FGD 4, 19/07/10).

This is also an example of mismatch (between the social experiences which learners had at CBE and in primary schools) serving as an attraction to learners from CBE. So the provision of break periods in fromal primary school attract them to their new institution of learning. Thus, learners from CBE schools showed that they liked and enjoyed break periods because it was time for them to refresh their brain after learning for some hours. They also ate food and played some games which invigorated their bodies. As a result, they felt fresh when they came back to class and that increased their concentration.

4.3 Lessons learnt when handlinng learners from CBE Schools

This section has presented lessons that teachers and head teachers have learnt when handlinng learners from CBE Schools. Teachers and head teachers said that they had learnt a lot of things when handling learners from CBE schools.

4.3.1 Good foundation in literacy and numeracy skills

Among other things, they had learnt that learners from CBE schools had good foundation in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. As such they were active and asked questions in class. One class teacher had this to this in an interview:

These learners are actually able to read , they are able to write , they are also able to solve sums, yes things like that. (CTI 2, 15/07/2010)

On the same issue another class teacher also commented that:

One day when I was teaching Chichewa I made a deliberate mistake in writing a word on the chalkboard. Immediately a learner from CBE schools raised his hand and said, 'Sir, you have made a mistake that word is not written like that.' I then asked him the correct way of writing that word and he wrote it correctly on the chalkboard (CTI 4, 19/07/2010).

The above view suggests that although the CBE curriculum condenses Standards 1 to 5 into three years, the learners develop the necessary competencies for them to rejoin and integrate effectively into formal primary schools. The competencies gained in CBE schools also do create a kind of base on which knowledge and skills in primary schools as learners integrate were built on match with those in the formal schools.

4.3. 2 Learner attendance/absenteeism

Secondly, another lesson that teachers and head teachers was that attendance of some of the learners was poor. This study established that the major contributing factor to high absenteeism rate for learners from CBE is their family backgrounds. Most of them were coming from very poor families. They faced problems in finding food, soap and learning materials such as pens and exercise books. Commenting on this issue one of the class teachers from the targeted schools (showing a deep concern) said;

Some of them come to school daily but there are some who do not come to school regularly. Their main problem is their parents . Yes their parents actually make them or send them to the maize mill, send them to the garden, send them to sell mandasi and other things. (CTI. 3, 16/07/10).

Concurring with this teacher

Aa Monga kumbali yaine vuto lenileni ndi uniform. Monga kwathu kuno kwenikweni timadalira ulimi wa thonje. Koma ndizonena kuti mitengo yake ndiyotsika pakadakhala kuti mitengo ndiyokwererapo mwina bwenzi kandalama kena kakutsala koti atipatse kuti tikagule uniform. Ndiye zimavuta kuti makolo atigulire uniform. Sinanganso chakudya ndichovuta moti zimatheka kuti tikamachokera kusukulu timapeza popanda chakudya. Chikhalidwe chakunonso ndichoti munthu umayenekera kupita kumunda

ukangodya kukalimako kaya ndi mizere 5 ndiye timatopa. (Onse aseka). (Ah. On my part, I do not have a school uniform and that is a problem to me. Here we rely on cotton and due to low cotton prices but if the prices were a bit higher may be our parents could have spared some money to buy us the school uniform. But this becomes very difficult for a parent to buy school uniform. This is so because food is also scarce and it is possible to go to school and find no food upon arrival. It is also the tradition here that one has to go into the field after eating food and may be you are expected to make about 5 ridges and this is very tiresome (All respondent laugh. (FGD 4, 19/07/10).

In connection to poor family background, the study found that one of the formal primary schools which had school feeding programme had a high number of learners from CBE. Out of the 21 learners from CBE who participated in this study 10 came from that particular school. Some CBE graduates who had originally enrolled with other primary schools without the feeding programme took transfers to join this school. During the face to face interviews the targeted class teacher commented that:

Aa, at this school we do not have so many problems with these learners yes most of them come to school daily. (CTI. 2, 15/07/10).

This finding would be an eye-opener to Ministry of Education and other education development partners to intensify and reach out to all schools with the provision of school feeding food stuffs and materials. As observed feeding programme at one of the schools served as a tool for promoting academic and social integration.

Related to the issues of absenteeism among learners in relation to their family backgrounds this study also established that learners from CBE were also kept busy by their parents to help in household chores in their respective homes during school days. For instance, it was learnt that some learners were kept busy with bird chasing in the rice gardens. This increased the problem of absenteeism among learners in the targeted schools.. One of class teachers during face to face interviews said that

When make a follow up why a learner did not come to school they always say

I was asked to do this and this at home by my parents.(CT 2, 15/07/10)

Although school uniform is not mandatory in primary schools in Malawi, the same issue became a barrier to learner attendance in Chikhwawa district. This is unlike the case of Nepal where upon the realization that graduates from MN4 Horizon were children from low socio-economic backgrounds there was a deliberate effort by the Nepalese government and the service providers to provide school uniform, shoes, socks and other learning materials as a form of educational support to CBE graduates (Kunz, 2010).

4.3.3 Age as a determinant of learner persistence during the integration

One other finding of this study was that age played an important role in determining persistence of learners from CBE in the formal primary school . This is because teachers and head teachers revealed that age hindered social integration. More especially in the case of learners who were over 15 years. cases. It was observed that on the onset, the number of learners that were enrolled in CBE schools during the pilot phase in Chikhwawa in 2006 was 232 at five learning centres. Only 101 learners completed the full three-year cycle in CBE, representing 43.5% while 56.5% dropped out. This high dropout rate raised a question as to why over half of the learners who initially enrolled in CBE schools dropped out again from

CBE schools. The major cause was that the pilot phase was done in an area close to the Illovo sugarcane plantations at Nchalo. Those children who felt old enough to work, preferred getting employed in the sugarcane plantations (and earn some money for themselves and their families) to learning either in the CBE schools or formal primary schools. Communities around Illovo Sugarcane Corporation are usually involved in digging irrigation channels, cane planting, cutting canes and processing them in the factory.

It must be noted here that some of the learners that were enrolled in CBE schools were over-aged as CBE targets children and youth aged between 9 and 17 (MoEST, 2008) and came from families that were hunger and poverty stricken. In the end, most of the learners dropped out again from CBE schools. For instance, during first term evaluation of CBE in Chikhwawa, it was reported that the older learners were particularly vulnerable to dropping out of school, with 39% having not reported for classes for over four weeks towards the end of first term of first year of the pilot phase (Moleni & Nampota, 2007, p. 18). Most of those who dropped out got employed at Nchalo to financially support themselves and their families. As for the girls, those who were over-aged, dropped out again and got married to sugar-cane cutters for support.

It was further reported that out of the 101 learners who completed CBE course, 60 learners rejoined the four targeted primary schools in 2008-9 academic year. By the end of 2009-10 academic year, 19 out of the 60 learners from CBE schools dropped out again. Most of these 19 dropouts were also over-aged. The same reason which had made some learners at CBE schools to drop out also applied to those learners from CBE who failed to continue with learning after rejoining primary schools.

Commenting on the issue of age, the class teacher for Standard 7 at one of the targeted schools said:

At this school three girls dropped because they were over-aged , one was 16 and two were 18 years old and other learners were laughing at them. Later on, I saw that they were not coming to school because they were in my class, by then I was teaching in Standard Five. We just heard rumours that they were married to cane cutters (CTI4 , 19/07/2010).

This comment reflects that it might be difficult to retain over-aged learners from CBE schools. Older learners from CBE could not mix freely with regular learners who were in most cases younger than them. The negative social experiences which older learners encountered coupled with economic and social pressures exerting on them prompted decisions of withdrawing from school amongst themselves . In reference to Tinto (1993; 1975) discussed in chapter 2.4, age is one of pre-entry attributes that determine the degree of learners interaction with new institution experiences. As seen here negative comments from regular learners yielded decisions of withdrawal from primary school among older learners (specifically girls) . This was also one of the reasons that made teachers to re-allocate some learners from CBE in upper classes disregarding their competences as it will be seen later in this chapter. On the impact of age on the integration of learners from CBE into primary schools one class teacher said that:

I decided to put one learner in Standard 6 because of his age despite the fact that he was fit to be put in Standard 4 as regards to his abilities (CTI5, 16/07/2010).

It could at this point be argued that age of some learners from CBE schools hindered them to be socially integrated into the dominant culture of primary schools. Apparently, this study unveiled that social experiences were major factors leading to re-dropping of learners from primary schools.

However, worth noting is the fact that most regular learners in primary schools in Chikhwawa district were also over-aged at the time of this study as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Age range of learners in primary schools in Chikhwawa

STANDARD	BOYS	GIRLS
4	7-18	6-18
6	8-18	8-18
7	9-18	9-18

Source: EMIS Report, (2009: 38)

The age range of learners from CBE who dropped again from primary school in Chikhwawa ranged from 15 to 18 for girls and 17 to 18 for boys (MoEST, 2009). (These learners were integrated in classes with regular learners who were also over-aged. As such, ages of learners from CBE were falling within the age ranges of learners in primary schools in Standards 4, 6 and 7 as observed from EMIS report above. This indicates that older learners from CBE who dropped out again from primary schools, might have done so because of not only insults about being past primary school-going age but there might have also been other reasons.

4.3.4 Primary school norms and values by CBE learners

This study had also established that teachers and head teachers believed that learners from CBE schools dodged manual work and punishment when they had made serious misconducts.

As such that these learners viewed these two aspects as a challenge in public primary schools to the extent that some could absent themselves from school or ran away when they were given either a punishment or during manual work days. However, worth noting is the fact that manual work and punishment form part of primary school norms and values in Malawi. Commenting on learners' resistance to do manual work in formal primary schools, one class teacher said:

They give problems when it comes to manual work. They say "we can not do that because at CBE school we were not doing manual work . Here you tell us to bring hoes, pails and the like." because of this some do not come to school during manual work days. (CTI ,1 14/07/2010).

Commenting on the issue of punishment another class teacher said that:

When we want to punish them , they refuse to do the punishment. They could leave the work given to them as punishment and go home. (CTI 2, 15/07/2010).

In agreement with the teachers' views on the issue of manual work, one learner during one of the FGDs (while laughing) commented that:

Zogwira ntchitozo ndiye zimaoneka za chilendo kwa enafe sinanga ku CBE kunalibe.(We look at manual work as a strange thing because at CBE there is no manual work (FGD 4, 19/07/2010).

Another learner commented on the flexibility of doing manual work in CBE schools and this said that:

Ifeyo tinkangosesa panja osati ngati momwe zimakhallira kuno kuti amene sadasese chibalo. Tikaona kuti pamalo pano sipalibwino timaona tokha kuti ndipofuna kusesapo. Tikamaliza kusesa timathamangira kukalowa mkalasi

ndikuyamba kuphunzira sinanganso nthawi yayophunzira idali yochepa. (We used to clean the surrounding but it was not like what is happening here: that those who have not swept are punished. But there, we could see for ourselves that the places were untidy and everyone of us could see that we needed to sweep the surrounding. After cleaning we could rush into the classroom to begin learning since we were learning few hours (FGD 3, 16/07/10).

On the issue of punishments some learners like this:

Tikangochedwa kulowa m'kalasi kunoko amatiuza kuti tikasese panja (When we are late for classes, we are told to sweep the school surroundings (FGD 1, 14/07/10).

Another learner observed that:

Chimene chimachitika n'chakuti kapena ndinene kuti ku CBE kuja ambiri timabwera mochedwa kukalasi koma sikumakhala chibalo. Sinanga aphunzitsi amtinyengerera chifukwa amadziwa kuti ena tidasiya sukulu ku pulaimale kamba koopa zibalo. (When we were in class at CBE schools that was it but may be what used to happen was that many of us were reporting very late but we were not punished. Our facilitators were in some way avoiding to disappoint us since they already knew that some of us dropped out from primary schools because of the same issue of punishment. (FGD 4, 19/07/10).

The learners' comments exposed that at CBE schools, manual work and punishment were not part of the order of the day. As observed from the learners' comments, punishment was not administered to learners at CBE schools because facilitators knew that some of those learners dropped out from primary schools because of issues of punishments and manual work. By design, facilitators treated learners at CBE schools fairly with the aim of retaining them in the centres. This created a mismatch in terms of their prior experiences at CBE schools and the

norms and values found in formal schooling. It is not surprising then that whenever these learners were given a punishment for defiance, late coming or noise making at primary schools where they were being integrated, they usually defied.

As educators punishment ought not to be the centre of focus but ensuring that good behaviour is enhanced in our children. This is an insight worth taking into considerations by educators because it had revealed that learners are not interested in punishment because they made primary school life tough to learners from CBE schools. This finding might consequently be one contributing factor for high absenteeism among learners in primary schools.

In addition, this brings the realisation that while punishment at school should aim at promoting good behaviour and instilling discipline in the learners, some learners tend to take punishment negatively. Similarly, administration of manual work at school is one way of ensuring that the learning environment is conducive. Something thing which one could have interest to know is perhaps was the intention and mode in which the two issues were administered for learners from CBE who are being integrated in the four targeted primary schools to have a negative attitude towards them.

Another insight to educators and education development partners is that learners from CBE needed to be oriented on some of the primary school norms and values before re-joining primary schools. While is appreciated that the time for CBE learning is short, educators and policy makers need to consider how best issues of manual work and punishment could also be incorporated in CBE curriculum. Practical awareness of such experience would not impede their integration.

4.3.5 The challenge with multi-age and multi-grade teaching

The study had established that learners at CBE schools were put in one class regardless of age and learning abilities. The practices include: multi-age group teaching and inconsideration on different learning abilities of learners who were primary school dropouts and those who had never gone to school. This had created problems on issues of placement when learners from CBE rejoined primary schools after schooling at CBE schools for three years. Commenting on this challenge, during CTIs, one class teacher said that:

Like here, the problem I have observed is that we are failing to re-allocate them very well in their proper classes as I already said that in CBE it seems that there are no limitations, learners with different ages at the same time who dropped out here at primary school from different classes are just mixed in one class. They do not consider whether others are doing well or others are just beginning; as a result it becomes difficult perhaps for the facilitator to make progress when teaching because when these learners are rejoining primary school there is a class in which they are to be placed. (CTI, 14/07/2010).

Thus, the CBE practice of not considering the age and abilities of learners when putting them into classes was perceived as a factor affecting the integration of such learners in formal primary schools.

Another teacher commenting on the same issue said that:

It is difficult to implement that because of how things are done in CBE. It would be good if learners, who started from the beginning in CBE term, were separated from others joining in between, so that those who started at the beginning are taught properly up to the time they finish their course; so that

when they are sending these learners in Standard 6 in primary schools they should be learners who had learnt everything that they were supposed to learn in CBE. In my thinking I feel that those who join would join CBE after others had already started, do not acquire enough knowledge and skills that would make them fit to be put in Standard 6; because as you know here at our school no learner from CBE schools were put in Standard 6 when they joined us. The way we saw them, they were not fit to be put in Standard 6. That is why most of them are in Standards 3, 4, 5 and those who joined in Standard 5 are now in Standard 6 (CTI 3, 15/07/2010).

The above view suggests that the integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools is not done in some schools as stipulated by the CBE programme. Thus, while the programme expects CBE graduates rejoining formal primary schools to start in Standard 6, in some schools learners are placed in lower classes depending on what teachers perceive as their level of readiness. It can be argued that such variations may point to the need for the CBE as a policy to be changed so that schools should place learners in classes that match their academic readiness after graduating from CBE. One of the lessons learnt from ACCESS in Tanzania (discussed in Chapter 2, section 3. 2), is that children completing basic education at ACCESS centres take the national standard 4 examinations to ensure that there would not be problems of placement of its graduates when they rejoin formal schools (Action AID Tanzania, 2002). Furthermore, in M4N Horizon children first have to go through a formal school entry test before being integrated into primary schools (Kunz, 2010). Perhaps the Malawi CBE programme would adopt these practices. This could help the learners' academic integration in formal primary schools to be seamless.

Commenting on the need for better placement of learners from CBE schools in formal primary school classes according to their abilities, another class teacher said:

We are finding problems to determine the class where to place them because we are not so sure of their abilities; the problem is that we do not link up with their teachers at CBE schools, yes (CTI 4, 16/ 07/ 2010).

The view possibly reflects two issues. First, an insight could be that the policy stipulation that CBE learners should rejoin formal primary schools in Standard 6 was not understood in the same way by different head teachers and teachers at primary school level. This resonates with Ball's (1993) observation that policy carries different meanings for different people and at different levels. The fact that not all learners from CBE were placed in Standard 6 in different primary schools reflects the different meanings that the policy carries in the different school contexts. The second issue could be that teachers disagree with the stipulation that learners from CBE schools should be placed in Standard 6 when rejoining formal primary schools. Instead, they would like to see consideration being given to the learners' abilities so as to match such abilities with the class they have to start.

It could also be observed here that perhaps adopting some features of the BRAC model (as discussed in chapter 2, section 2.4) could help reduce the problem of placement of CBE graduates when they re-join primary schools. As noted, the BRAC model categorises its learners into age groups. There is a category of BPSs, four-year programmes for out-of-school children and youth under ages 8-10, covering grades 1-5. There are also the BAPSs which are four-year programmes for 11-14 year olds, covering grade 1-4.

4.4 The role of stakeholders during the integration of CBE learners

This section discusses the findings for question 4 which aimed at soliciting information on the role which is played by different stakeholders such as the service providers (AGLIT), primary school administration and the PEA in supporting learners to integrate well in primary schools in Chikhwawa district. The study established that support given to learners who were being integrated in the primary schools in Chikhwawa was very crucial.

4.4.1 Support given by AGLIT

This study findings shows that there was no proper and collaborative planning for continued support for learners from CBE who re-joined primary schools after completion of the three-year cycle at CBE schools. To begin with, Adolescent Girls Literacy and Training (AGLIT) was one service provider supporting learners from CBE that were being integrated into formal primary schools. It provided all education materials such as books, pens, pencils, rulers and notebooks in CBE schools in Chikhwawa. Whenever need arises AGLIT even provided food items and soap to the learners. This is so because most learners from CBE schools came from poor families. Having that in mind, Nampota, (2009) states that, when the CBE pilot phase ended in 2008, learners who showed interest to rejoin primary schools were given exercise books and pens as a starter pack which would help them in primary schools during their first days. Commenting on the support that AGLIT rendered to learners who completed a three-year cycle at CBE schools, Officer 1 in Chikhwawa district said that:

Aa, we thought of giving these learners material support like exercise books and pens as a starter pack as they were closing, which we did and we also thought that we would be visiting them in primary schools to check on their progress. First time during second term when they were in Standard 6 in

primary schools we went and we found that they did not have writing materials such as exercise books, and pens. We therefore provided them with exercise books even though it was not on our budget. (Officer 1, 30/07/2010).

When the learners were handed over into primary schools, it was expected that their welfare, even in terms of learning resources, would be handled by Ministry of Education through the primary school administration. However, lack of resources in primary schools forced learners from CBE schools to continue asking for learning resources from CBE service providers, AGLIT. For instance, commenting on this issue, Officer 1 also said that:

These learners reported to CBE facilitators that they did not have writing materials. CBE learners come from same villages with CBE facilitators and they often meet so when they meet they discuss some of the things that happen at primary schools and it is during such meetings that they told them that they do not have exercise books. In fact, at CBE learners were given exercise books so they thought they would also be receiving exercise books at primary schools. So when they saw that they were not receiving the exercise books they decided to approach the facilitators. That is why we just decided to give them for the second time. We also thought this would also be an encouragement to them to see that we are still supporting them while at primary school knowing that it will take some time for them to adapt to the new primary school conditions. We thought that if we do not give them they would drop again. So we do not want them to drop again (Officer 1, 30/07/2010).

It can be suggested here that due to poor family backgrounds of most of the learners who came from CBE schools, consideration for continued support of learning resources for them such as exercise books once they re-joined primary schools in Chikhwawa district was very important. Otherwise it would be difficult for these learners to completely forget the support they used to get at CBE schools. The afore-discussion is a demonstration of a mismatch between CBE and formal primary schools in terms of distribution of learning resources to learners. As observed this served deterring factor for academic integration.

4.4.2 Support given by Ministry Education

This study also established that the primary school administration treats learners from CBE as any other learner in that there is no special treatment that is given to them. Learning resources such as exercise books, pens, pencils and rulers are provided to all learners equally when these things are in stock. The major problem which primary schools face is that the government does not distribute teaching and learning resources in primary schools equitably and timely. As such those learners from CBE schools who were being integrated in primary schools in Chikhwawa district, suffered because they came from poor families that could not provide them with necessary learning materials. On this issue one of the targeted head teachers said:

*Wherever need arises we support them in the same way we do with our learners
(HTQ 1, 15/07/2010).*

Emphasising the equal treatment given to all learners in formal primary schools, another head teacher said:

They are treated equally as their fellow learners (HTQ 2, 16/07/2010).

This stresses the fact that learners from CBE are not treated in a special way in relation to their poor socio-economic backgrounds. However, this may point to the need for schools to keep some materials for supporting those learners who cannot afford to get them on their own. Despite the fact that this could be criticised as introducing preferential treatment of some learners in the school, it has the potential of working as a pro-poor strategy aimed at helping learners from CBE to integrate into formal schooling. Commenting on the lack of preferential treatment of learners from CBE, one head teacher said that:

They are not given special support, when we have exercise books we give to all learners (HTQ 3, 17/07/2010).

Another head teacher also commented that:

The support that we give them, mainly are exercise books which we give to every one (HTQ 4, 19/07/2010).

In general, Government provides teaching and learning resources in all schools in Malawi. When such provisions are made, head teachers and teachers distribute those learning materials to all learners. However, the study established that learners in primary schools in Chikhwawa district did not receive learning materials for the whole of 2009-2010 academic year. This was confirmed by Officer 2 who was responsible for the supervision of primary schools where learners from CBE were being integrated. This entails that the Ministry of Education did not distribute any teaching and learning resources during the year learners from CBE had re-joined primary schools. This was not only in the schools where learners

from CBE were being integrated but even to the rest of the schools in Chikhwawa District.

Commenting on this issue, the Officer 2 said that:

I work together with service providers, sometimes we go to the primary schools to give them exercise books because the three years they have been at CBE schools they were provided with pencils, exercise books and sometimes they were given soap and clothes and the like. So because of problems we have under normal education primary schools, up to now it's almost three terms learners in primary schools are not given pencils, pens, and exercise books. So I had to go to AGLIT officials that if you do not provide these learners with exercise books, pencils and the like they are going to (raising her voice) redrop! So we sat down with AGLIT staff as our service providers to look into that one. So sometimes they had to go there with exercise books and the like to give only those CBE learners (Officer 2, 29/07/2010).

The above view shows that support for learners from CBE is necessary for their retention in the formal primary schools as they are being integrated. Resonating with Tinto's (1993) observation, a mismatch between prior experiences and those of the new institution may affect learner survival in the new institution. In the case of this study, the mismatch between experiences learners had at CBE schools and the formal primary schools in terms of support may negatively affect the learners' academic integration. This calls for consideration on what Hoppers (2006) raised that given the different and sometimes contradictory implications of agendas for the distribution of resources there is a need for defining the nature, degree and modalities of integration in order to address the specific needs of the disadvantaged or marginalized social groups.

This study has also established that there were no formal or planned monitoring or follow-up activities by the PEA and AGLIT to the schools that were integrating learners from CBE schools in Chikhwawa District. This could have helped Ministry of Education and service providers to check on how the integration of those learners into formal primary schools was going on. Through monitoring or follow-up-visits it would be easy for Ministry of Education and service providers to know successes and challenges which the learners were facing. However, it was assumed that as long as learners from CBE were handed over into primary schools they would be treated as any primary school learner. Monitoring or Follow-up visits that AGLIT had so far conducted were carried out as a result of reports which it received from CBE facilitators concerning problems of learning resources which learners from CBE schools were facing in formal primary schools. Commenting on this lack of follow-up visits, Officer 1 said that:

Aa, until there was this request for the provision of writing materials, its when we said we needed to visit them to see how they are doing or if they are still there in primary schools. So it's when we went and learners from two schools also reported to us that some were being teased by the learners they had found in primary school. In some cases we found that those who were older even some teachers in primary schools would want them maybe to be sent to upper classes. Yet such learners were either referred to may be Standard Five on his or her performance. The head teachers just looked at their age and they recommended that this learner should be in Standard 6 or Seven while that learner could not perform. So such learners felt that they were not welcomed and some of them dropped again. But then one main challenge for us to move to these primary schools regularly is the issue of

fuel because it is not in our budget. Much as we realize that there is a need for follow-up activities we don't have resources (Officer 1, 30/07/2010).

Issues raised above suggest that procedure for the integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools were not inclusive in the sense that implementation of any change calls for monitoring of how the implementation is going on. Failure to consider this fact during planning for the integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools left behind this important element of monitoring. Justification for this claim is lack of resources such as fuel for the education officers and service providers who could have frequently been carrying out this task of follow-up visits to schools that are integrating learners from CBE schools. Secondly, adhoc planning also left behind the issue of resource mobilization and that is why it is observed that there was no provision of learning materials to learners for the whole academic year of 2009-2010 academic year. This is contrary to the belief that policy implementation is a set of tasks. The tasks include policy legitimization, constituency building, resource accumulation, organizational design and modification, resource mobilization and action, and monitoring progress and impact (Hadad, 1995. P. 24).

In addition, despite the fact that Officer 2 who was responsible for quality control in primary schools did conduct some follow-up visits to primary schools where CBE learners were being integrated, these visits were not conducted regularly. One of the reasons for that irregularity was that the officer was operating from Nsenjere Zone which is over 40 km away from the four schools that participated in this study. The participating schools were from Boma and Mbewe zone. The officer was entrusted with that task when the responsible PEA for Boma Zone fell ill and later on, passed away. As such the PEA for Nsenjere Zone was asked to replace her. Time factor was a problem because that officer, had to divide her time to visit her zone and the schools where CBE learners were being integrated. Further to that, lack of

resources such as fuel also hampered her operations of conducting regular follow-up visits to the schools in question. Comment no this Officer 2 said that:

I have been making follow-ups to find out what these learners are doing. I remember when I went to Bereu Primary the head teacher said most of these learners are doing very well because it seems the information they were getting at CBE were more advanced. But I don't visit these schools regularly because of shortage of fuel on my part. As I said I do not live here and to move to these schools, it is a distance of over 40 km and to rely on my normal allocation which I also use for visiting schools in my zone, (raising her voice) uu! I find it difficult. Fuel is always the problem.(Officer 2, 29/07/2011).

While it is appreciated that resources are also limited, it should be suggested here that collaboration in resource mobilization and accumulation between CBE service providers and Ministry of Education. This would help in the intensification of follow-up visits and the provision of learning materials support learners rejoining formal primary schools. Otherwise the intention of reducing the problem of out-of school children and youth may not be achieved. This is because if the learners from CBE are not supported, their integration into formal primary school it may be difficult for them to be effectively integrated socially and academically in primary schools and this may be a cause for them to drop out again.

4.5 Factors for or against successful integration of CBE learners

This section discusses factors that were perceived to be enhancing or retarding smooth integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools in Chikhwawa District. On one hand, factors that promoted integration comprised learners' prior knowledge and skills which they acquired in CBE schools, continued support; and community involvement. On the other hand, factors that acted against successful integration included inadequate

community participation in the integration process; lack of orientation to the learners at CBE schools about primary school norms and values; poor communication of the integration procedures to the implementers; use of the derogatory name *Abuthu* (a girl or boy who has not reached puberty stage) to refer to learners from CBE schools in Chikhwawa District; and lack of communication of results of standardised tests at the end of the three-year course at CBE schools to teachers and head teachers in formal primary schools.

4.5.1 Factors that facilitated integration of CBE learners

Good background in literacy and numeracy skills

The findings of the study show that one of the factors facilitating integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools is the learners' prior knowledge and skills acquired from CBE schools. Generally these learners had good background in literacy and numeracy skills. As such they did not fail to cope with the demands in literacy and numeracy. It was easy for them to perform relatively well or average, in subjects such as *Chichewa, English and Mathematics*. Commenting on the performance of learners from CBE during their integrating in formal primary schools, the Officer 2 had this to say:

Teachers say that these learners are doing better than some of the ordinary ones. They also say they have noted that the materials they were taking at CBE were advanced (Officer 2, 29/07 2010).

The above remark reflects that what CBE curriculum Provides helps learners to develop competencies which they put into use when they rejoin formal primary schools. This agrees with Tinto's (1993; 1975) theory of student retention and departure which state that high grade (performance) promotes persistence among learners in their new institution.

Support from service providers (AGLIT)

Another factor promoting integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools was the support they got from service providers. Since most learners from CBE come from low poor families, some of them tended to be absent themselves from school because of lack writing materials. At CBE schools they were learning under very favourable conditions where all learning resources were provided for. For instance, the study on Evaluation of First Term of CBE showed that some primary pupils were jealous of CBE learners because CBE schools had more resources (e.g. stationery) than the formal primary schools (Moleni & Nampota, 2007, p. 15).

In this study, this support was provided by AGLIT who gave the learners from CBE notebooks, pens, pencils and rulers. This happened because officials from AGLIT had received a complaint from facilitators that learners from CBE absent themselves from school because of lack of resources. For instance, all learners from the targeted schools had not received writing materials from the beginning of 2009-10 academic year till the time data collection for the study was done which was in July 2010, the month that learners were also preparing for end of year tests. During FGDs one of the learners commented that:

Aa monga kwa ineyo mavuto alipo ndithu ndipo ena mwa mavuto omwe timawapeza kuja ku CBE kunonso aliponso. Mwachitsanzo usiwa, kusowa makope ndi zina zofunika pa moyo wa kuno kusulu. Panopo ino ndi temu yachitatu koma makope sitidalandire. Makope amene ndikulembamo ndi omwe tidalandira tili mu sitsndade 6. Panopo sitidalandire makope (Aah. In as far as I am concerned, challenges are still there. Some of the challenges I encountered at CBE are also found here. For example lack of clothes, writing materials like exercise books. Right now for three terms, I have not

received any exercise book. The exercise book I am using, I received them when I was in Standard 6. Yes, we have not received any exercise book).
(FGD 4, 19/07/2011).

Extra-curricular activities

In addition, extra-curricular activities constituted another factor that facilitated the integration of learners into formal schooling. Extra-curricular activities such as sports and play facilitated smooth integration because as CBE learners interacted with regular learners in the primary schools they developed relationships, gained trust, learnt empathy, respect and tolerance how to cooperate, manage conflicts, obey rules and act within a team. Kunz (2010), in his study on M4NH, observes that sport and play activities contributed to “breaking the ice”, making the children feel at ease with the new situation. As such learners from CBE began to socially integrate into the group of children in the various classes at primary school and they also abandoned their initial shyness.

Community involvement

Furthermore, literature also attributes successes of CBE approaches to community involvement in the management of learning centres and ensuring that learners attend school regularly (Kunz, 2010, Nampota, 2009). After noting that at one of the four targeted schools absenteeism among learners from CBE was high, the PEA met parents and discussed with them about the importance of encouraging learners to go to school regularly. Thereafter, the situation improved. On this issue Officer 2 commented that:

During supervision of the schools that are integrating learners from CBE, teachers complained that absenteeism among learners at one of the schools was high; we called for a meeting for parents to discuss the importance of encouraging their children to go to school regularly. After that meeting things improved (Officer 2, 30/07/2010)

While it is appreciated that as a result of poverty many children are forced to go out of school to earn an income in order to sustain themselves and possibly their families (Hoppers, 2006), the evidence given by Officer 2 above indicates that community involvement could play a greater role in facilitating smooth integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools.

4. 5. 2 Factors acting against smooth integration of CBE learners

This section discusses the factors that acted against the smooth integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools. The factors included the following: Poor communication about the integration procedures to the implementers at school level, lack of handover of standardised assessment results from CBE schools to primary schools, lack of orientation for learners from CBE, as they completed the pilot phase, on norms and values in primary schools negated their smooth integration into formal primary schools, the nickname *Abuthu* (a girl or boy who has not reached puberty stage), used to describe learners at CBE schools.

Poor communication on integration procedures

Poor communication about the integration procedures to the implementers at school level was one of such factors. For instance, this study found out that only one out of the four targeted schools had knowledge about the procedures through a meeting which was conducted by AGLIT and the Primary Education Advisor (PEA) when they were receiving learners from the nearby CBE school. The meeting was conducted with the aim of explaining to teachers on how the integration procedure. At this primary school learners from CBE schools were re-allocated in Standard 6 which is the appropriate class as stipulated in the NESP (MoEST, 2008).

However, the other three schools were not briefed on integration procedures. As a result, learners were not re-allocate in Standard 6 as it was officially expected, instead the learners from CBE schools rejoining primary schools were placed in classes they had dropped out from, before they were enrolled in CBE schools. These three schools did not follow the official procedures for the integration because they did not know them.

The CBE policy stipulates that after schooling at CBE for three years, a learner is equivalent to a Standard 5 primary school learner in terms of competences in literacy and numeracy (MoEST, 2005; Moleni & Nampota, 2007). Despite the fact that policy change and implementation procedures may be communicated to different stakeholders through various strategies, for instance, through meetings, on the radios and through policy documents (Hadad, 1995), this study has also established that not many teachers or schools have access to education policy documents such as the NESP. It is also for this reason that teachers from three targeted schools never new about the implementation of CBE programme Chikhwawa district.

In some cases, poor communication brought uncertainty in precise class allocation for learners from CBE schools who re-joined formal primary schools after completing the CBE course . For example, owing to high levels of performance, some learners were promoted from one class to another within the same academic year. At one school, a boy who had dropped out from primary school while he was in Standard 2 and had later joined and finished a three-year programme at a CBE school was re-allocated in the same class when he rejoined primary school in 2009-10 academic year. When he out-performed his fellow classmates in end of term one tests, the class teacher recommended for his promotion to Standard 3. In the end second term tests, the boy got position one in Standard 3 and the head

teacher recommended his promotion to Standard 4. Thus, in the same year, the learner moved from Standard 2 to 4. Results for end-of-year tests for Standard 4 showed that the boy also got position one in that new class. Commenting on the ability and performance of this learner, a Standard 4 teacher had this to say:

(Showing some excitement) At this school one boy from CBE was put in Standard Two, but he surprised us because of his intelligence. Term one he was number one at end of term tests, yes. The class teacher of that class decided to promote him to Standard Three. In second term he also got number one and the head teacher also recommended that the boy should be pushed to Standard Four where you have found him (CTI, 14/ 07/ 2010).

It can be suggested that misunderstanding on how the integration process should be carried out resulted in delaying some learners from CBE schools to rejoin formal primary schools in classes suitable for their abilities. This in a way raises a justification for the argument that where a policy is not properly communicated to the implementers and/or implementers' failure to capture any list of steps or phases to be followed, the change may not take the course as intended (Hadad, 1995; Fullan, 2001).

Lack of handovers of standardised assessment results form CBE schools to primaryschools

Another factor that hindered smooth integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools was lack of handover of standardised assessment results form CBE schools to primary schools. This study established that although the facilitators had administered standardised tests, results were not handed over to primary schools for those schools to have background knowledge of the ability and academic performance of the learners from CBE being integrated in their primary schools. As a result, when these learners re-joined primary schools the school administration asked about the class they had dropped from before joining

CBE schools with the intention of placing them in the same classes. On this issue Officer 1, commented that:

Well, by the end of third term we had given them an end of course assessment to determine whether the learners would do well in Standard Six or Five. However, there was no linkage with primary school teachers on the way these learners were to be assessed. But I understand that when they went back to primary schools they were also assessed by the class teachers and most of them were shifted to upper classes.

(Officer 1, 30/07/2010).

The above assertion shows that in the absence of clear understanding about the integration procedures of learners from CBE into primary schools, teachers placed those learners in classes according to their performance in CBE schools. Thus, integrating these learners into primary schools would have somehow been facilitated if there was handover of standardised assessment results done at the end of the three-year CBE programme to primary schools. This is, however, in contradiction of what is stipulated in National Education Sector Plan about CBE programme that these learners should rejoin formal primary schools in Standard 6 (MoEST, 2008).

Furthermore, differences in the implementation of the integration procedures with regard to class placement of learners rejoining formal primary schools, ascertains the notion that policy carries different meanings for different players in society, from the point of conception to the point of implementation and practice (Ball, 1993; Odden, 1991) can be used here. The claim is that the variations may reflect the different meanings that the CBE policy has to the implementers at school level. Thus, some schools understood the policy as stipulating that learners from CBE should rejoin formal primary school in the class they were in before they

dropped out. For other schools, they understood the policy stipulation as implying that schools should place learners from CBE according to their abilities and their performance at CBE. Yet other schools understood the policy stipulation as meaning that all learners from CBE should rejoin formal primary schools in Standard 6.

Lack of orientation for learners from CBE, on norms and values in primary schools

In addition, this study noted that there was no orientation for learners from CBE, as they completed the pilot phase, on norms and values in primary schools negated their smooth integration into formal primary schools. This is because such learners find some routines in primary schools to be new to them. For instance, doing manual work and punishments are not part of the norms at CBE schools. When these learners rejoined primary schools they found such practices as some of the challenges in primary school life. Officer 2 observed that:

Of course, at primary school there, the only difference between CBE learners and normal learners is that there at CBE centres, learners were handled in a special way. They could go to school without even washing their clothes, even without (laughing) washing themselves. They could go to school one hour late, so because we thought that this would be a challenge to them so we had to sit down with the head teachers and the teachers there to tell them to handle these learners in a special way. So when they are late you have to sit with them and tell them what they are supposed to do. So little by little they started to change and now they are doing as normal learners (Officer 2, 29/07/2010).

Thus, the mismatch between the treatment the learners got from CBE schools and the formal primary schools they had rejoined did affect their integration. A lesson learnt from M4NH was towards the end of the 9 months course for the learners in its schools orientation on public at M4NH schools (Kunz, 2010). This was very important in the sense that the orientation enabled learners to learn some pertinent issues regarding public school life.

Effects of the nickname “Abuthu”

Furthermore, the study found out that, unintentionally, the nickname *Abuthu* (a girl or boy who has not reached puberty stage) was used to describe learners at CBE schools and that became a source of mockery to such learners during their integration into formal primary schools. In Chikhwawa, learners in CBE Schools are known as *Abuthu* because their schools are called *Sukulu za Tsogolo la Abuthu* (Schools for Children’s future). However, some learners from CBE schools were above the age of 12, entailing that they had already reached puberty stage. As such calling them by that name irritated them socially because they felt being insulted, detached and inferior to the regular learners in primary schools. The use of the nickname *Abuthu* also affected learners’ academic integration. Commenting on the use of this name, Officer 1 said that:

One of the problems which learners from CBE faced mostly during their early days in primary schools is being teased and called names such as ‘Abuthu’ by other learners they found in primary schools. This was reported to us by the facilitators, you know most of the learners who rejoined primary schools are old. So these learners, more especially girls, were being laughed at by fellow learners and in some cases, even by their teachers. So this discouraged some learners such that they dropped out again (Officer 1, 30/07/2010).

Officer 2 concurred with the above observation and made this remark:

Normal learners tease them that they are coming from sukulu ya Abuthu (Schools for young children), sukulu ya kwacha (Adult Literacy School) , things like that (Officer 2, 29/07/2010).

The above observation revealed that sensitisation about the integration of learners from CBE into primary schools did not target all pertinent stake holders, for instance, the regular learners at primary schools. Sensitizing all relevant stakeholders was necessary because it could be a way of reducing the effects that the unintentional use of the nickname *Abuthu* had on these learners. In addition, the observation above had also revealed that there is a great need for service providers of CBE and Ministry of Education to prepare learners from CBE through counselling sessions so that they should know in advance what they were likely to face in primary schools and how to surmount it for them to continue with schooling. Otherwise the intention of reducing out-of-school children and youth cannot be achieved.

Lack of community sensitisation

Finally, the study also found that the community was not involved in the process of integrating learners from CBE into primary schools. This was because parents were not sensitised on their roles and responsibilities during the integration process. Consequently, parents did not take an active role in encouraging their children to go to school regularly. Instead, some of them kept their children busy with household errands such as farming during school days, resulting in irregular attendance of school by such children. As such, this was observed to be also another factor negating smooth integration of learners from CBE into primary schools. Commenting on this problem, one of the class teachers observed that:

The problem is that parents do not encourage their children to come to school. I think the learners parents should be sensitized about the importance of school. That is very important (CTI 3, 16/07/2010).

The observation above reflects the importance of involving communities in the integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools in Chikhwawa district. This is because without the support of parents, learners' commitment to school was reduced and that is why,

absenteeism and drop out of learners being integrated were experienced. It could be argued here that this is reflecting what was observed by Coleman (1998) that student commitment to schooling and /or learning is primarily shaped by parents through the curriculum of the home. Learning from Nepal's M4NH model discussed in chapter 2, section 2.4 facilitators and social mobilizers involved parents in their effort of facilitating the transition of learners from M4NH into public schools. Apparently, absenteeism was seriously monitored and checked by parents, which was not the case with the Malawi CBE. This is a factor worth considering by service providers and Ministry of Education if the integration of learners from CBE schools into primary schools was to be successful.

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the research findings on the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE during their integration in formal primary schools. Experiences reflecting their integration academically and socially into the formal primary school have been described. Tinto's (1993; 1975) theory of student retention and departure has been used to analyse and explain the academic and social experiences and factors with the potential of retaining learners or forcing them to depart from formal schooling. In addition, the chapter has focussed on lessons which primary schools teachers and head teachers had learnt when handling learners from CBE; the help that service providers, the PEA, and primary school administration provided to learners from CBE once they rejoined formal primary school. Lastly, factors that facilitated or acted against successful integration of learners from CBE into formal primary schools have also been discussed.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses major conclusions drawn by this study, recommendations and policy implications of the conclusions drawn. Lastly, it suggests areas for further studies. The study explored the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE schools as they integrate into primary schools in Chikhwawa District. In that exploration, the study was based on the following research questions: What were the academic and social experiences of CBE learners as they integrate into primary schools in Chikhwawa District? What had teachers and head teachers learnt when handling learners from CBE? What support did CBE service providers, the PEA and school administration, offer to learners from CBE? Lastly, what factors promoted or militated against successful integration of learners from CBE into primary schools in Chikhwawa District? Thus, the conclusions, recommendations and suggestion for further study presented here are in relation to the findings based on these subsidiary research questions as discussed in Chapter 1, section 4.

5.2 Main Conclusions

One conclusion drawn from this study is that CBE programme has the potential of re-routing out-of school children and youth back to primary school to continue with their education. The rationalisation of this conclusion is the fact that in Chikhwawa district, out of 101 graduates from 5 CBE learning centres 60 learners were re-routed into formal primary schools, representing 59.0%. This demonstrates that CBE programme can help to increase access to primary education to the out-of-school children. The percentage of learners who rejoined primary schools in Chikhwawa indicate that almost half of the learners who finished the pilot phase of CBE were being integrated into primary schools.

In addition, this study has also drawn the conclusion that learners from CBE integrated well academically in the primary schools. This was facilitated by their good background in literacy and numeracy competencies which interacted well with some academic experiences in primary schools. The academic experiences in the primary schools included: teachers' individual help, learners' good literacy and numeracy background enabled them to integrate well academically. In addition, involvement of learners in participatory learning approaches such as group work and access to library resource was also one of the experiences that facilitated academic integration of these learners in primary schools. In this regard, the practice with CBE in Chikhwawa district has demonstrated that it is a sound programme in improving literacy and numeracy skills among its graduates. This good background helped those graduates to relatively, integrate easily into formal primary schools. As articulated by Tinto (1975) discussed in chapter 2, learners' pre-entry attributes, which in the case of this study, included prior schooling knowledge and skills in subjects such as *Chichewa*, *English* and *Mathematics* facilitated their academic integration in formal primary schools which they had rejoined.

The performance of learners from CBE in primary schools in the subjects mentioned in the preceding paragraph was relatively high as compared to that of regular learners. This performance served as a catalyst for academic integration. As such learners from CBE were performing well in the formal primary schools they had re-joined. This could be due to a number of factors. One factor could be that the facilitators at CBE schools, despite the fact that they were not qualified teachers, were doing a good job in helping their learners to develop competencies in *Chichewa*, *English*, and *Mathematics*. It was these competencies that enhanced the learners' academic integration into formal schooling.

However, the facilitators who were teaching them in CBE schools were not trained as primary school teachers, they were just volunteers. In addition, learners at CBE schools were also learning very few hours as compared to primary school time tables. It would therefore be expected that learners coming from those schools would not be performing well once integrated in primary schools. Paradoxically, learners acquired literacy and numeracy skills more easily and this was demonstrated through their good performance in following subjects: *Chichewa, English and Mathematics*.

Another conclusion drawn from this study is that some of learners' social experiences in primary schools had the potential to promote while others had the potential to hinder their integration into formal schooling. On one hand, some social experiences with primary school life acted as an attraction to learners from CBE. For example, learners' involvement in extra-curricular activities and break period experiences in formal primary schools influenced social integration between learners from CBE and regular learners. These experiences were cherished highly because they did not experience that in CBE schools.

On the other hand, there were also experiences as regards to social commitments or obligation in the formal primary schools that did not match the learners' previous experiences in CBE schools. According to Tinto's (1975, 1993) theory of student retention and departure, pre-entry attributes of a learner interact well or not with social and academic experiences in the new institution a learner may decide to stay or depart from school. Those social experiences such as manual work, punishment and from insults which older learners were receiving from regular learners posed a challenge for them to integrate well socially in primary schools. Lack of prior experience in these issues made them to perceive punishment and manual work negatively. Negatively, these issues escalated absenteeism of learners in the four targeted primary schools in Chikhwawa.

In the case of CBE in Malawi, Learning Centre Management Committee (LCMC) members are supposed to make follow ups on learners who absent themselves from school regularly (Moleni & Nampota, 2007; Nampota, 2009). However, this study has also established that as learners from CBE schools were being integrated into primary schools in Chikhwawa, parents were not committed in checking their school attendance regularity absenteeism in primary schools. This was as a result of socio-economic factors: family obligations and inadequate financial resources. Some learners, who were not attending school regularly, did so because they were involved in household chores such as farming activities and doing some piece work in order to find resources like food and soap for themselves and their families. Lack of parents' commitment to encourage learners from CBE to attend school regularly promoted learner absenteeism and school dropout. Prather (1993) asserts that parental commitment is one of the most important variables in regular school attendance by learners and is in turn a good predictor of completion and achievement. To complement this Moleni and Nampota (2007) and Nampota (2009) uphold that lack of parental commitment to encourage their learners usually poses a great barrier towards learner attendance.

Another conclusion of this study is that as a policy issue, integration of learners from CBE was not properly communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Consequently, some learners from CBE were not re-allocated in the expected class when they rejoined formal primary schools. While the CBE programme stipulates that such learners should be placed in Standard 6, most of them were placed in wrong classes. For some learners, the classes they were placed in were usually below their abilities. In one scenario a learner got promoted from Standard 2 through to Standard 4 in one academic year (2009-2010). This class misplacement of learners rejoining formal primary schools from CBE was because teachers in primary

schools did not clearly know and understand the policy stipulated about the integration of such learners in their schools. There was no proper communication of the policy issue to the implementers at primary school level. As such, some learners were being delayed although they had good literacy and numeracy skills from CBE schools.

5.3 Recommendations and policy implications

On the basis of the findings of this study as discussed in Chapter 5, one recommendation to educationists and policy makers is that there is a need to explore fully the practices at the CBE schools in order to come up with a deliberate policy initiative of adopting some of the best practices that make learners to acquire literacy and numeracy skills more easily. This would be to ensure that the teaching and learning methods employed by facilitators at CBE schools should also be used in primary schools. This would also help to create a match between the methods used in CBE schools and those used in formal primary schools. In this way learners in lower classes at primary schools would also acquire literacy and numeracy skills more easily.

Furthermore, Ministry of Education in conjunction with service providers should re-design CBE curriculum so that it incorporates all relevant subjects that are taught in primary schools. This is to ensure that learners should come out of CBE programmes with prior knowledge and skills for all subjects which are taught in primary schools. Consideration on this aspect would facilitate academic integration of learners from CBE in primary schools. Similarly, CBE curriculum should also incorporate co-curricular activities such as sport and play and other activities such as manual work; that are done in formal schooling. Orientation on the primary school norms and values during the last year of their three-year course at CBE

schools should also be taken into account by Ministry of education and Service providers. Inclusion of co-curricular activities, manual work and other school activities which are treated as norms and values of formal schooling, will enhance social integration of CBE graduates in primary schools.

Another recommendation is that given the poor socio-economic backgrounds of many CBE learners, as reflected in this study, efforts should be made by the government and service providers or education development partners to provide material support in terms of learning materials, school uniform, soap and basic food for these learners. Such support would serve as a motivation for the learners to continue with education, thereby reducing the problem of out-of-school youth in Malawi. This could probably be achieved through partnership and collaborative planning in the preparation for the transition of learners from CBE to primary schools. Collaboration would be effective in leveraging resources and achieving objectives of CBE.

Another recommendation is that for the successful implementation of the CBE policy, it is also important that Ministry of Education and education development partners should ensure that there should be proper communication channels on implementation procedures to all relevant stakeholders. Strenuous efforts should also be made in providing civic education to different stakeholders on the implementation procedures and the importance of the policy. These stakeholders should include; the primary school administration, teachers, learners and communities who will be directly involved in the integration of learners from CBE schools in primary schools. This can help to create in the community members and other stakeholders a sense of commitment to the implementation of CBE.

In addition, proper communication and orientation on the integration of learners who graduate from CBE and re-join formal primary schools from CBE would help to avert haphazard class placement of those learners. This could involve developing well-defined partnerships and joint planning between CBE facilitators and formal primary school teachers on how well to integrate these learners from CBE into formal schooling. This would be to ensure that social service providers of CBE, such as AGLIT, continue providing support to learners from CBE rejoining formal primary schools and as a motivation for such learners to continue learning.

5.4 Suggestions for further study

While this study has explored the academic and social experiences from CBE during the integration into formal primary schools and factors that facilitate or hinder such integration, there are other areas that need exploration. For instance, a further study on the survival or completion rates of these learners up to Standard 8 would help to throw some light on whether the CBE policy in Malawi is, indeed reducing the problem of out-of-school children and youth. This would entail a longitudinal study that would follow up learners rejoining formal primary schools from up to completion in Standard 8. An extension to that would be a study following up such learners that complete formal primary school and go to secondary schools to illuminate how they would cope at secondary school level.

Furthermore, a comparative study on the academic and social experiences of learners from CBE schools being integrated in primary schools in other districts of Malawi such as Ntchisi and Lilongwe Rural would help to develop a deeper understanding of how the integration of learners from CBE schools is going on in Malawi.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter presented a brief background of this study, the statement of the problem contextualising it at global and national levels. It has also presented the conclusions of which the major conclusion is that learners from CBE integrated well academically in the primary schools they had re-joined upon completion of the three-year course at CBE schools. This was contrary to how these learners integrated socially; partly it was positive and partly negative. Recommendations and suggestions for further studies have also been presented here are in relation to the findings and based on these key research questions.

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APPENDICES: Appendix 1: Introduction letter

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI



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5th July, ~~2008~~ 2010

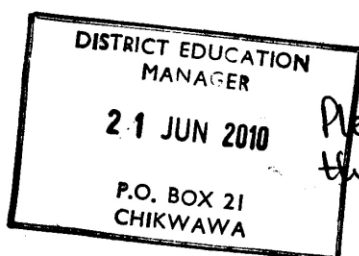
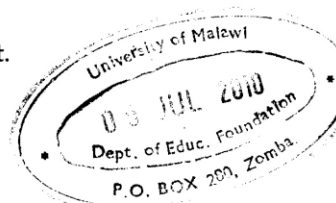
Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCING DINNAH KATONDA

I have the pleasure to introduce to you Dinnah Katonda, our M.Ed [Policy, Planning and Leadership] student in the faculty of Education. To fulfill some of the requirements for the program, Dinnah is investigating "integration of Complimentary Basic Education Learners into Primary Schools". She is now required to collect data for her thesis. I, therefore, write to kindly ask for your support towards her study as she collects the data and related literature.

I thank you in anticipation for your cooperation and support.

Dr. Bob Wajizigha Chulu
Lecturer in Psychometrics & Head, Educational Foundations Department



Please, let her collect the information required.

Appendix 2: FGD interview guide/mafunso (Instrument1)

1. Why did you decide to re-join primary school after completing CBE course?

(Chidakuchititsani ndi chiyani kuti mutatsiriza maphunziro a CBE mudzayambenso ku pulayimale?) Probe: Kodi ku CBE ndi chiyani chidakukopani mtima kuti mudzayambe sukulu ku pulaimale?

2. What are the similarities and differences in the way you were learning in CBE schools and here at primary school?

(Pali kusiya kwanji pamomwe munkaphunzirira ku sukulu za CBE ndi momwe mukuphunzirira ku pulayimale kuno? Probe Chikusiyana ndi chiyani kwenikweni?)

3. Which subjects do you like or dislike most? (Why?)

Ndimaphunziro omwe (mumakonda kapena kudana nawo kwambiri kuno kupulayimale? (Chifukwa chake ndi chiyani?)

4. What things did you learn in CBE schools that are helpful for your learning at Primary School?

Ndi zinthu ziti zomwe mudaphunzira ku CBE zomwe zikukuthandizani pa maphunziro anu ku pulaimale? Probe: Kodi maphunziro a CBE akukuthandizani bwanji pamene muli ku pulaimale?/ Ndi luso lanji lomwe mudaphunzira ku CBE lomwe likukuthandizani pa maphunziro anu kuno ku pulayimale?

5. How do you work with the regular learners in your class?

(Kodi mumathazan bwanji ndi anzanu omwe muli nawo mkalasi yanu?

{Probe}: Mumakambirana nawo zinthu monga ziti? Mukamacheza
mumamakambirana zinthu zokhudza chiyani?)

6. How does your teacher help in your learning activities?

Aphunzitsi anu amkuthandizani bwanji pa maphunziro anu? Probe: M'kalasi?

Aphunzitsi anu amakuthandizani bwanji pa maphunziro anu? Probe: M'kalasi
mumakhala bwanji ndi aphunzitsi anu?)

7. What things are making you to remain in primary schools?

(Ndi zinthu zANJI zimene zikuthandiza kuti inuyo mupitirizebe maphunziro
anu kuno ku pulayimale? Probe: Kupatula za m'kalasi ndi zinthu zina ziti
zochitikachitika zimene mumatengako mbali pa sukuklu pano?).

8. What problems do you face at primary school?

(Kodi ndi mavuto ANJI omwe mukukumana nawo pa maphunziro anu ku
pulayimale? Probe: monga m'kalasi, zipangizo zophunzirira kapena mavuto
ena alionse omwe akuchititsa kuti maphunziro anu asamayende bwino).

Appendix 3: Interview guide for class teachers (Instrument 2)

- 1.** What kind of orientation did you receive in readiness for the integration of learners from CBE schools into your class?
- 2.** Comment on the following issues concerning CBE graduates
 - i. class attendance
 - ii. Performance in class
 - iii. Numeracy and Literacy competencies
 - iv. Participation in other school activities
- 3.** How do CBE learners work with their fellow formal pupils in class and others within the school?
- 4.** How do you help learners from CBE schools in your class?
- 5.** What challenges do you face when handling CBE graduates in your classes?
- 6.** In your opinion, what things would make the integration of CBE learners into primary school successful?

Appendix 4: Open-ended questionnaire for head teacher

- This study intended to explore academic and social experiences of learners from CBE as they integrate primary schools in Chikhwawa.
- The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality unless with your permission
- Thank you for accepting to take part in this study

1. Name	Male	Female
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2. Age

3. What kind of orientation did you receive as regards the integration of CBE learners in your schools?

4. What is performance of learners from CBE like in class?

5. Comment on the relationship between learners from CBE and regular learners, as well as between these learners and their teachers in the primary schools where they are being integrated?

6. What kind of support do you provide to the learners from CBE in your schools?

7. What Problems do you face in handling CBE graduates in your school?

8. What factors do you think could facilitate smooth integration of learners from CBE schools, into formal schooling?

9. What challenges would act against smooth integration of CBE graduates into formal Schooling?

Appendix 5: Face to face interview guide for CBE district coordinator (Instrument 4)

1. How did you prepare teachers and head teachers in readiness for the integration of CBE learners in their schools?
2. How many CBE pupils who completed the three-year cycle of the pilot phase have joined primary schools in Standard six in Chikhwawa district?
3. What kind of support do you give to CBE learners in primary schools?
4. What follow up activities do you do with the primary school teachers and head teachers after the integration?
5. What strategies have you put in place to track and retain CBE graduates in primary schools?
6. What challenges do CBE graduates experience in the primary schools?
7. How best could the challenges be addressed?

Appendix 6: Interview guide for PEA (Instrument 5)

- 1.** How did the Ministry of Education prepare the head teachers and teachers for the integration of CBE learners in primary schools?
- 2.** What kinds of support do you give to the learners from CBE that are being integrated in the primary schools in Chikhwawa district?
- 3.** What measures are taken to retain learners from CBE schools that are being integrated in the primary schools in Chikhwawa district?
- 4.** What factors do you think could facilitate smooth integration of CBE graduates into Formal schooling?
- 5.** What challenges do teachers face as they integrate CBE learners in the teaching and learning process?