



UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

College of Medicine

**Tackling Millennium Goal 3: Promoting gender equality,
women's empowerment and health by reducing the gender
disparity at secondary and trade school level in a rural area of
Malawi.**

By

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Bachelor of Arts (Hons), RGN

Dissertation Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Master of Public Health Degree

December 2007

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DECLARATION

I, Michaela Diane Renshaw-Calisse, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any other awards at the University of Malawi or any other University.

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Date 15th December 2007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of Mary O'Neill who is the fundraising coordinator of Ubwino Wa Amayi and who accompanied me to Namitembo for all the stakeholder meetings and group discussions as well as providing her experience in managing meetings and in building consensus and taking minutes.

I am also grateful to Father Owen O'Donnell who provided great support, assistance and advice at all the meetings, Agatha Kalawa a teacher and role model for girls who has coordinated all the community sensitisation in Namitembo, to Professor Cameron Bowie for his academic supervision and to Patrick, Louis, Tamar and Isobel for their understanding and patience.

ABSTRACT

Introduction : High boy/ girl ratios are more evident in secondary education especially in rural areas. Policies and action are therefore needed to ensure that the drop out rate for girls is reduced and to create more opportunities and an enabling environment for girl's education.

Objectives : The objectives of this policy study were to reduce poverty and ill health in the long run by reducing gender disparity in the secondary schools and trade school in Namitembo; to remove some of the barriers to girls continuing their education and to bring the issue to wider attention through community sensitisation and publicity.

Methods : Through problem identification, situation and stakeholder analysis and community committee meetings, a policy report was written for a small charity that was setting up a project in a rural area of Malawi.

Results : Seventy five (75) girls who had dropped out of school were selected by the community to receive a bursary which would enable them to continue their education at secondary school or the trade school. The policy to pay school fees for the girls was chosen for the first phase of the project as this was seen to be the greatest barrier preventing girls from finishing their education.

Conclusions : Community participation, problem and stakeholder analysis enabled a small charity to set up a project in a rural area of Malawi by determining real needs, potential constraints and building consensus in the identification and design stage. It also enabled them to produce the log frame necessary for its successful implementation and evaluation.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
AGLIT	Adolescent Girls Literacy Project
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAMFED	Campaign for Female Education
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EFA	Education for All
GABLE	Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education
GoM	Government of Malawi
GVH	Group Village Headman
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IHS	Integrated Household Survey
ITN	Insecticide Treated Net
ILLOVO	Formerly Sugar Corporation of Malawi
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio

MSCE	Malawi Certificate of Secondary Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSO	National Statistical Office
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother- To- Child- Transmission
TA	Traditional Authority
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNU/WIDER	World Institute for Development Economics Research.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WHO	World health Organization

We need all those with the power to change things to come together in an alliance for girl's education: governments, voluntary progressive groups, and above all, local communities, schools and families.

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Malawi is a small landlocked country with a young and rapidly growing population, a high population density (12.3 million in 2005) and is the second poorest nation in the world. It has a low per capita income level with 52% of the population (6.4 million) living below the poverty line (the poverty line being defined as MK16, 165 per year or US\$1/ day) and 22% (2.7 million) in ultra poverty.¹ People in Southernmost and Northernmost rural areas are most affected (See Figure 1). 90% of the population lives in rural areas where a living is made from subsistence farming and rain-fed agriculture. Malawi has a high inequality index with a GINI of 0.38ⁱ which means that there are greater inequalities in access between the richest 10% of the population and the poorest 10%.

In 2005, Malawi ranked 165th out of 177 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI) because of low achievement in three dimensions of HDI, those being, GDP/Capita; adult literacy rate (knowledge and combined primary/secondary and tertiary education gross enrolment ratio) and life expectancy at birth. The pattern in education and health indicators mirrors the absence of any changes in income measures of poverty during the past 10 years.

The Millennium Development Goals have provided a target for Malawi and similar countries to aim for in order to reduce poverty and inequality but since the 1998 Integrated Household Survey (HIS), there has been little progress in reducing poverty [Malawi Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment 2006.]¹ Whilst some inroads have been

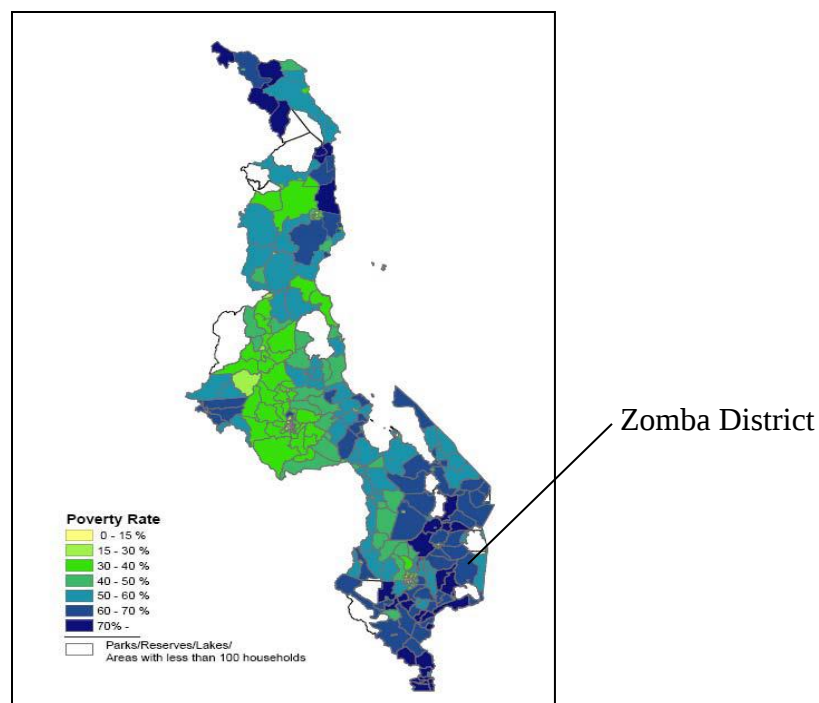
ⁱ GINI is a standard measure of inequality based on the mathematical measure of the Lorenz curve where 0= perfect equality and 1= perfect inequality. [Malawi P&V Assessment Draft 2006 p xiv]

made into achieving the goal of universal free primary education and literacy levels have improved, other MDG's such as promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and eradication of hunger remain elusive. Indeed, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) at 960/100,000 live births, the Child Mortality Rate at 133/1000 for under 5's [Malawi DHS 2004]² are amongst the highest in the world and 44% of under 5's are stunted, a consequence of chronic malnutrition.

Education, gender disparity, regional location, malnutrition, land ownership, population size, livelihood, household size, access to tarmac roads and lack of opportunity are seen as the main determinants of poverty.[Malawi P&V Assessment 2006¹, IHS2 2005]³

Ways of tackling poverty, must therefore address these issues, particularly gender equality, if the global objectives in development hope to be achieved by 2015.

Figure 1. Map of Malawi showing regional poverty rate



Source: Malawi P&V Assessment Draft 2006

The map shows the poverty rate in different regions of Malawi and how the most northerly and southerly regions are most affected. In Zomba district, poverty levels are 60-70%.

1.2 Definition of policy being addressed

Key words:

Health policy, health promotion, determinants of health, literacy, education, empowerment.

Gill Walt [1994] has defined health policy as “courses of action that affect the set of institutions, organisations, services and funding arrangements of the health care system. It goes beyond health services and includes actions by public, private and voluntary organisation that has an impact on health.”⁴

Health is affected by policies outside the health sector such as environmental policy (e.g. water), education policy (e.g. quotas of male to female enrolled into schools) and insecurity or instability (e.g. war and famine.)

Health policy involves allocation of resources; influencing determinants of health to improve public health; government policy for health services; and health politics. Often the health and education sectors have low status compared to other ministries and also have high costs. Implementation, especially in rural areas, is therefore often poor. Policy formulation may involve other actors such as interest and pressure groups, donors, international agencies, voluntary bodies and advocacy groups. All have their own agendas.

The goal of health promotion is to increase people's control over their health and its determinants [WHO 1986], the primary objective being to increase resources for health through empowering people and improving environments in which they make health choices.

A voluntary charitable organisation (Ubwino Wa Amayi) was set up in response to the problem of gender disparity in schools identified in the rural area of Namitembo which is near Chingale in Chief Mlumbe's TA, Zomba District.

In Namitembo, like many rural areas in Malawi, the facts speak for themselves. Poor resource allocation by government ministries has led to inadequate health services and school resources. One health centre caters for a population of 27, 350 [DHO Zomba]⁵. There is a government health centre in Chingale, a small CHAM health centre at Chinseu run by outreach services from Malosa, 2km away from Namitembo mission and a larger CHAM health centre at Chipini 19km away. The total population of the district of Zomba is 546, 661 (projected to 609,914 for 2007 [NSO Statistical year book 2006]).⁶

In Chief Mlumbe's area of Namitembo and the surrounds, the population is around 116,283 [Malawi Population and Housing Census 1998]⁷. This high population level is mirrored by a low level of school attendance and a low number of students who qualified with an MSCE (Malawi school leaving certificate) [quoted in Zomba Diocese Trade School report 2004]⁸. In 2007, the MSCE pass rate was 28% in Namitembo [Namitembo parish figures].

The school drop out rate is high especially in girls. People go through periods of drought and starvation (Zomba rural has higher than the national average for severely stunted

children 20% compared to 17%)⁶ and poverty levels are high, subsistence farming being the main occupation. Distances to schools, and health centres are high, many people having to walk 2km or more. Road access is poor.

1.3 Problem statement

The problem identified is that there is a gender disparity in the two secondary schools and the trade and agriculture school in Namitembo. The policy goal for this charity being set up is to reduce the gender disparity by improving female attendance at school. The objectives are to pay the school fees for girls who have dropped out due to lack of funds marriage and pregnancy; to sensitise the community on the importance of girls finishing their schooling; to raise awareness in general about how illiteracy, especially in women can affect health and impede progress; and help to put pressure on government to provide universal free secondary education in the near future in a gender sensitive context.

Literacy, health and human rights.

Like health, education is enshrined as a basic human right in the Malawi constitution.⁹

Article 20, section (1) ChIV states that discrimination of any persons is prohibited and are under any law guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status.

Under the rights of children, article 23, section (4), children are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation or any treatment, work or punishment that is likely to (b)

interfere with their education and (c) be harmful to their health or to their physical, mental or spiritual or social development.

Under the rights of women, article 24, women have the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their gender or marital status and legislation shall be passed to eliminate customs and practices that discriminate against women, particularly practices such as (a) sexual abuse, harassment and violence, (b) discrimination in work, business and public affairs.

Article 25 section (1) states that all persons are entitled to an education and (2) primary education shall consist of at least 5 years.

Article 30 section (1) states that all people shall have the right to development and to the enjoyment of economic, social, cultural and political development and women, children and the disabled in particular shall be given special consideration in the application of this right. Such measures shall include equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, shelter, employment and infrastructure.

Whilst these issues are enshrined in the constitution and offer guidance for achieving goals of equality and development, on the ground, the reality is often very different.

The national gender policy ¹⁰ requires that all development players including Government Ministries and agencies, NGO's, CBO's, private sector and donors mainstream gender in their programmes. According to the policy, section 5.1 on education and training, 'more equal relationships between men and women can only happen if both girls and boys benefit from non-discriminatory education'. The Beijing platform for action, paragraph

69¹¹ states that ‘if women are to become agents of change, equal access to and attainment of educational qualifications are necessary.’

‘Training for women gives exceptionally high social and economic return and has proved to be one of the best means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth’ According to the gender policy, literacy of women is an important key to improving health, nutrition and education in the family and to empowering women to participate in decision-making in society.

1.4 Evidence and literature review

A review of the literature surrounding health policy, education policy, gender policy, and the effects of illiteracy on health, poverty and development shows that female illiteracy is responsible for a multitude of ills in society and programmes that have been instigated in various developing countries to remove barriers to education of the girl child have demonstrated the beneficial effects of female education on health, poverty levels and economic development, which are all inextricably intertwined.

Female literacy and health

The evidence for the effects of female illiteracy on health and development is well documented.

According to a paper by Cornia G.A and Mwabu G. on health Status and health policy in Sub-Saharan Africa [1997], ¹² the main determinants of child health status in Africa are; real average per capita household income, female literacy rate, nutritional status, safe water supply, immunisation coverage and broad accessibility to health services. Through its discussion on mortality models such as recession and growth models and health

behavior models, it demonstrates that the main underlying determinants of mortality are maternal factors such as maternal health and education (described as a ‘slow-moving stock variable’), personal behaviour, food intake and household disease control measures. Cornia et al [1987]¹³ suggest stock effects can shelter people’s health even in times of sudden economic hardships. Availability of health information is also correlated with female literacy and outreach health services. The paper provides some suggestions on measures that can be taken to improve health status through policy making to enhance access to basic health services and to act on factors outside the health sector. These are an improved economic and political environment, anti poverty measures, improved efficiency and reducing costs of health services.

There have been a number of Studies on the health impacts of low literacy levels [Caldwell 1979, 1986]¹⁴. Papers by Caldwell have documented the negative relation between child and maternal mortality risk and level of education in the mother and controlled for wealth, social status and other variables. Data from the world fertility survey were used to test conclusions based on a Nigerian study that maternal education is important in reducing child mortality. It suggested that schooling loosens traditional cultural ties.¹⁵

A Systematic review of the literature (De Walt et al 2004) found that patients with low literacy were 1.5-3 times more likely to experience a given poor outcome such as increased incidence of chronic illness and poorer health markers.¹⁶ Literacy through childhood, adolescence and adulthood contributes to health literacy [Levine et al 2004].¹⁷ The acquisition of literacy also has a positive impact on child survival and access to health services [Sandiford et al. 1995].¹⁸ This study highlighted that although there is an

absence of data from intervention studies, a retrospective cohort study on women who became literate by adult education in Nicaragua, showed a significantly lower mortality risk of malnutrition than in those who remained illiterate. Papers by Nutbeam [2000]¹⁹ and Kickbusch [2002]²⁰ discuss that health literacy is a key outcome from health education and is a discrete form of literacy which enables people to make changes in their environments that will influence their health.

Literacy, reproductive health and child mortality

One of the objectives of the Malawi Demographic Health Survey (DHS) is to assess the status of women in the country and to provide detailed information on what effects health for policy makers and programme managers. From the DHS 2004 data², which sampled a nationally representative survey of 11,698 women age 15-49, it can be seen that women in urban areas, more educated women and those in the highest wealth quintiles are more likely to receive quality care in pregnancy, such as assistance by health care professional at delivery and postnatal care- this has a bearing on the maternal mortality ratio which at 984/100,000 live births, is one of the highest in the world.

According to the DHS, studies have consistently shown that education attainment has strong effects on reproductive behaviour, contraceptive use, fertility, infant and child mortality and morbidity and attitudes and awareness related to family health and hygiene. For instance, age at first birth decreases with education, as does the percentage of mothers who are adolescent. It is well known that children born to young mothers face an increased risk of illness and death. The under five mortality rate for women with primary education standard 1-4 is 77/1000 compared to 25/1000 with secondary+. [p 128]

Education is an important variable in fertility related behavior analysis. Total fertility rate (TFR) declines as educational status increases. The TFR is 6.9 with no education, 5.8 with primary and 3.8 with secondary schooling.

There is a strong consistent correlation between maternal education and child health but other factors could account for it, such as intelligence. A study by Sandiford P. et al [1997]²¹ found evidence that intelligence is an important determinant of child health in the illiterate and that education may have a greater impact on child health for mothers of relatively low intelligence.

An anthropometric study of chronic malnutrition in pregnant adolescents in rural Malawi [Kalanda B et al 2006]²² found that adolescents had a higher prevalence of low values of weight for age, 77.9% of the 190 adolescents were illiterate and concluded that under-nutrition and illiteracy were common amongst adolescent pregnant women where child bearing starts in early adolescence. It also suggested that innovative health and literacy strategies are required to address the considerable nutritional consequences.

Table 1 Received key selected immunisations by highest educational level

		Highest education level			Total	Chi sq test
		No education	Primary	Secondary		
Received BCG	No	12%	6%	3%	8%	P<0.005
Received DPT 3	No	20.5%	14.7%	3.4%	15.5%	P<0.005
Received POLIO 3	No	25.9%	18.1%	8.4%	19.6%	P<0.005
Received MEASLES	No	20.6%	16.1%	6.2%	16.7%	P=0.001
Received POLIO 0	No	59.1%	50.6%	49.7%	53.1%	P=0.001
Vitamin A in last 6 months	No	26.1%	19.7%	11.7%	21.0%	P<0.005
Vaccinated during polio 2000	No	89.5%	87.5%	97.4%	88.9%	P=0.17

Data in Table 1 suggest that immunisation coverage increases as education increases [Source: Bowie C et al 2005]²³

Literacy and gender equity

Affecting health in an indirect way is women's empowerment and gender equity. The data from the DHS 2004 ² provides some insight into women's control over their own lives. Women's attitude to wife beating is an indicator of empowerment. The higher the education of the woman, the less likely she is to agree that the husband is justified in beating his wife for specific reasons. There also seems to be a relationship between this and child mortality [p130 8.].

The DHS shows that for every indicator from nutritional status of children to use of insecticide treated bed nets (ITN's) to knowledge of signs of danger in pregnancy and knowledge of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT), there is less related morbidity and mortality the more educated is the woman. [p181 for mean z-scores and p192 for PMTCT].

Interestingly, one indicator that shows little difference between lower and higher education attainment is marital violence, be it physical or emotional. [p27]). Table 15.10 on p278 of the DHS shows that there is no strong link between women's empowerment status and their experience in spousal violence, however, they are less likely to accept wife beating as the norm. (See also Bangladesh experience in discussion section.)

The policy in Malawi is to give primary education for free, but this cannot be met without more resources such as teachers, books, education materials and facilities. Although the government (GoM) has given high priority to the education of girls, retention and achievement rates have shown that GoM decree alone cannot bring about the required changes. Research has shown that as girls progress up the education ladder, their shares progressively decline, especially in rural areas, resulting in far fewer girls making the

transition into secondary and tertiary education. In Malawi there is a strong differential in education attainment between the sexes. 15% of men and only 8% of girls have attended some secondary school. The median years of schooling are 1.8 years for women and 3.1 years for men. The DHS also shows that 37% of children age 5-14 are currently engaged in some type of work which gives them less opportunity to attend school and are more susceptible than adults to an unfair working environment such as no pay and physical abuse. Whilst the proportion of women who have attended secondary school has increased from previous generations, only 62% of women in the 15-49 age group are literate (up from 49% in 2000) whilst men's literacy is 79%. In rural areas male youth are twice as likely as female youth to attend secondary school [DHS EdData survey 2002 p31]²⁴. There is also the problem of over-age pupils. This may have an impact on learning as they are in a class with pupils who are at different stages of social, physical and intellectual development. There is evidence that girls who are over age for grade are more likely to drop out before completing primary school.

Most head teachers and teachers are male and there is always a shortage of teachers who are poorly paid. This does not provide a good role model for girls.

Literacy and Poverty

There is a high correlation between poverty and level of education. Lack of money and cost of schooling is the by far the most common reason given by respondents in the Integrated Household Survey [IHS2 2005]³ for not continuing with education. Access to secondary and tertiary education is heavily skewed towards the richest quintiles of the population. Distribution of benefits from public expenditure and access to services is also biased towards richer than poorer households with only 11% of the benefits in secondary

schooling accruing to households in the poorest quintile [IHS2]. One aspect of this is lack of boarding facilities in rural CDSS. Families simply cannot afford boarding fees even if education is free.

Poverty is a key underlying cause of ill health. Figure 3 shows how poverty, poor health and illiteracy are all inextricably bound. Each determinant overlaps, is interchangeable and is affected by another. It also shows how poverty is a multi faceted concept which encompasses numerous aspects of well being. The cycle of poverty is exacerbated by poor health (malnutrition, infectious diseases, sanitation), lack of education and inequality. In turn, these are perpetuated by poverty. This has an impact on the development of a country.

Figure 2 Graph showing relationship between malnutrition and education of mother.
Source: IHS1 1998 data

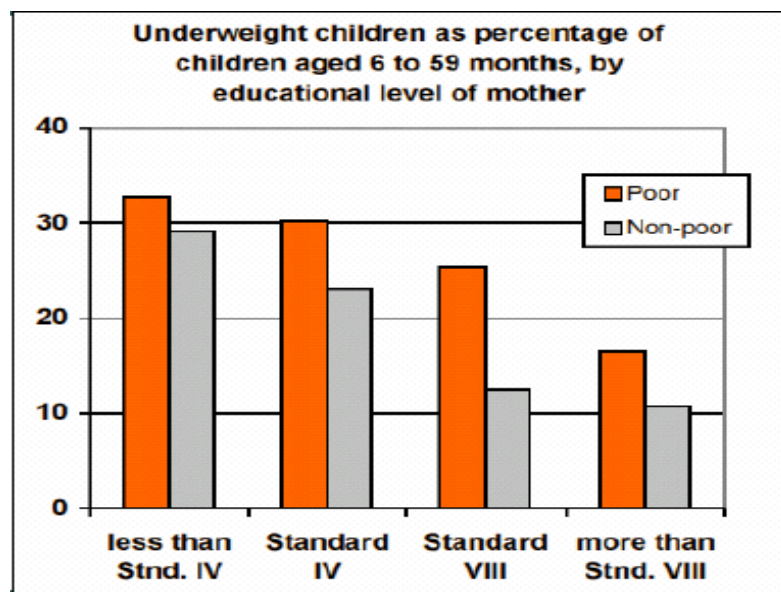
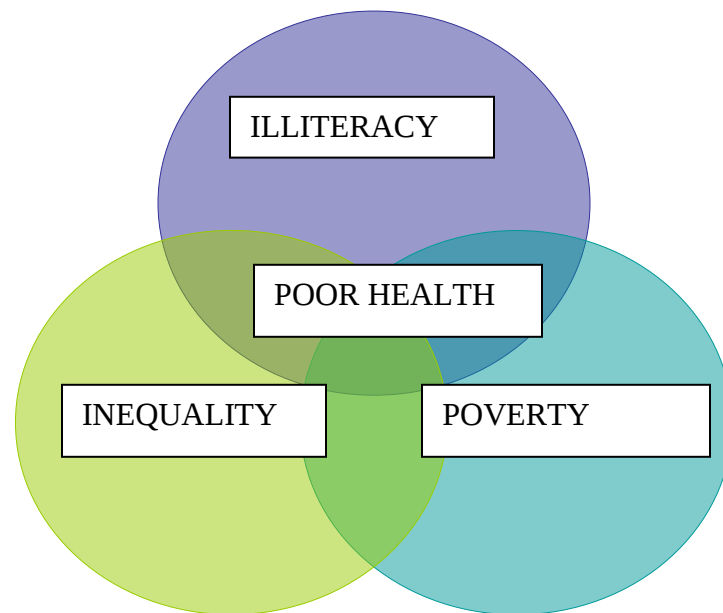


Figure 3 Diagram showing poverty cycle



Literacy and Education Programmes

It is against this background that formal and informal literacy and health education programmes have been set up in Malawi and other countries in Africa.

One such programme is AGLIT set up in Chikwawa in 1997 initiated by the Malawi college of Medicine and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine sponsored by UNICEF, NORAD and ILLOVO, among others, with the aim to improve adolescent girl's health seeking behaviour through equipping girls with a functional literacy and health education curriculum whilst addressing locally relevant issues such as HIV/AIDS.²⁵ Results showed an increased ability to recall new or modified health

knowledge about for example, risky practices relating to HIV, prevention and treatment of common local diseases such as malaria, cholera and scabies and improving childcare, sanitation and nutrition. This programme has shown excellent results in changes of knowledge, practice and attitudes and has improved social status and self- confidence in adolescent girls through income generating activities, afternoon lessons in functional literacy and numeracy, mini-libraries and games.²⁶

CAMFED²⁷ was set up in Tanzania in 2005 to extend girls access to education and to support young women to become leaders of change.

In Malawi DFID²⁸ helped to increase school enrolment by an extra 1 million children when the Ministry of Education (MoE) announced free primary education for all.

The African girl's 'Scholarship Plus' Programme funded by AED (Academy for Educational Development) and USAID (source www.eldis.org)²⁹ in countries such as DRC and Rwanda not only provides funds for scholarships for girls, money for school fees, supplies, books, uniforms and shoes they also take into account cultural, family and economic issues and try to make it the norm in the community for girls to stay in school- this makes it more than just relieving the economic burden- it comes from the community themselves to facilitate the enabling environment. Community organisations work with schools and community members who become mentors and role models to influence girls to stay at school and with families to allow girls time off from household chores for one hour per day to do homework.

A USAID funded project in Malawi called 'GABLE' (Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education) waived secondary school fees for girls who did not repeat a class in

primary school. In 1996-7, 42,000 girls benefited. This project was revised when primary education became free, and though controversial, (communities challenged giving fee waivers to girls only and not boys)³⁰ helped to spread awareness on girl's education issues resulting in a new gender sensitive curriculum and improved teacher/ pupil ratios.

Uganda has had free universal primary education since 1997. The Ugandan government has been doing a feasibility study for the past year on introducing free Universal Secondary Education (USE) and has in January 2007, just implemented a policy to give free education to those who have completed primary education and passed their exams. The first phase of the plan includes 700 public and 280 private schools but the aim for all children in Uganda to have access by 2010. In this 'pro-poor intervention', the Ugandan government has released 7.3 billion Shillings (US\$ 4.2 million) and has enforced 'rigorous accountability measures so that the money will be used correctly'. Vocational and technical training not included in the original plan will be incorporated as more funds become available.

Whilst this plan has its critics, with people complaining that the schools selected are in well off areas, and that it is politically motivated, the overall goal is a good one. Making a promise and keeping it is another matter. [Sperling].³¹

Lessons from Bangladesh

In order to encourage adolescent secondary school girls to delay motherhood and marriage, a girl's stipend programme started in Bangladesh in 1982 was a response to a burgeoning population. Literature had shown that educating girls would delay marriage,

reduce fertility and increase contraceptive use. [Raynor J. Citing Herz, 1991; Shahidur R. 1996; World Bank 1993].³² As one of the barriers to access to education is poverty, paying stipends seemed the logical first step. Although this programme is generally seen as a success because it increased enrolment figures and provided equal access, further investigation has revealed that paying stipends does not necessarily ‘resolve a host of education, gender and development problems.’ Issues such as sustainability, education quality and equality, special activities and instructional support also need to be taken into consideration. Various studies have looked at the impact of girls education on fertility, empowerment, equality, employment and although little impact can be discerned on these in the Bangladesh programme, one study [Pathmark 2001]³³ compared those who received the stipend and those who did not, over a longer period of time and it did indicate that girls from the study areas were more likely to be employed, be involved with decision making and to protest against unwanted marriage.

Studies on the stipend programme also raised concerns about the quality of education which was reported as ‘declining’. A contributing factor may have been the increased enrolments compromising quality and this often showed in poor exam results especially in girls and decreased interaction time between already limited teaching resources and students.

A study on the impact of development interventions on health in Bangladesh³⁴ found that the provision of rural credit, schools and empowerment of women (BRAC education programme) have a direct and measurable effect on health and fertility. It looked at the impact of non-health interventions such as literacy, education and livelihood skills on health as part of a rural development programme and took an holistic view of poverty as a

complex syndrome, not as just insufficient income or unemployment. As such, programmes were established to foster income and employment generation, self help, conscientisation, awareness raising and gender equity. These programmes have been remarkably effective [Ahmed et al 1993, Chowdhury et al 1999]³⁴, with less than 5% drop out rates, 100% attendance, high achievements in primary schools and a 98% loan repayment rate in microfinance credit schemes. This has been attributed to the creation of an enabling environment of choice in which the poor participate in their own development with their own consciousness. Improved health is seen as only one element of the programme.

1.5 Justification of choice of policy

With the MDG's, and the Dakar framework for action, 'education for all (EFA) is everyone's business'. The question is, what can be done and who should act? The responsibility for securing the right to education involves a variety of actors- National governments, civil society, the private sector and communities. The Government of Malawi and other countries have made some progress in increasing enrolments and reducing gender disparities through legislation and by making primary education free to all children. As a result of this policy, enrolment at primary school level rose from 1.9 million to 3.2 million in one academic year. (The Malawi National Commission for UNESCO 2006)³⁵ This put huge pressure on the secondary school sub sector which has resulted in a proliferation of private secondary schools and the conversion of Distance Education Centres into Community Day Secondary Schools. The selection policy also changed from a girl boy ratio of 70:30 to 50:50. Unfortunately the quality of the

education has been compromised by an acute shortage of qualified teachers, poor teacher recruitment and retention policy, inadequate classrooms and school buildings, low quality learning and teaching materials, low funding to the sector resulting in poor supervision and inspection, lack of conducive school environment and overcrowding in the classroom.³⁵ In turn, these result in high absenteeism, high repetition rates, poor performance, high failure rates (for e.g., this year's pass rate for MSCE was 37%) and high drop out rates, especially in girls.

According to the MoE, the achievements in secondary education have been improved enrolment from 86,000 in 1994 to 180,000 at present. There has been an increase in the number of schools from 97 in 1994 to 967 in 2006, [UNESCO 2006] an increase in the number of qualified teachers from 1250 to 2411 and an improvement in the curriculum, a re-entry pregnancy policy, sensitisation campaigns and improvements in terms of gender equity and access. These achievements in enrolment may have been accomplished in part by the proliferation of unregulated private schools.

This policy was chosen because; in an international context, Malawi has elected to take a human rights approach to development by ascribing to certain treaties such as the Beijing platform for action and the Millennium Goals. Progress on the Millennium Goal 3, to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education no later than 2015, to date has not been good enough. In the world there are still 100 million children out of school and 60 million of these are girls.³⁵

In a national context, many rural areas of Malawi boys outnumber girls in secondary schools in some cases by 4:1. According to UNESCO, Malawian girls are more prone to

repetition and drop out than boys, and women constitute most of the country's illiterates. Like in Bangladesh [Raynor J. 2006]³², this situation has arisen due to poverty and lack of money within families to pay for girl's school fees, families often choosing to favour boys when it comes to education and girls education seen as good only if it will help them in their domestic life. A study by World Bank and the Malawi government indicates that 68% of girls are engaged in domestic chores, some of which is exploitative labour and are likely to drop out of school to ensure the household is maintained.³⁶ Other reasons for high drop out rates in adolescent girls are lack of motivation and interest in school (DHS EdData survey 2004)²⁴, long distances to walk, lack of food during the day, early marriage and pregnancy (and cultural practices such as *kupimbira*)ⁱⁱ. These result in gender disparity in schools, low literacy rates in females compared to males and this has a health impact on women and ultimately men, the family, the community and the whole population because women can be agents of change.

In Chikwawa district for example, illiteracy is 67.9% in females and 45.1% in Males. [NSO 2004], ⁶ resulting in poor sexual and reproductive health among adolescent girls [AGLIT]²⁵.

It is also increasingly being recognized that the Millennium goals will never be achieved without an holistic approach and a dramatic increase in investment in health systems [WHO report 2005] especially relating to maternal health. [Lule E. et al]³⁷. This article recommends that what is required is a real commitment to gender equality within and beyond the health sector, which includes reducing gender disparities in primary and

ⁱⁱ *kupimbira* is the practice of marrying off girls in times of hunger and scarcity. Survey carried out by UNESCO and ministry of Gender 2005. 'Promoting gender equity' Malawi Nat. commission for UNESCO

secondary education, reducing discrimination in the work place, improving property rights and ending violence against women- all of which are laid down in legislation but in reality are not taking effect. A recent report in the media [Daily Times March 6 2007] by the Malawi Human Rights Commission has stated that the implementation of international laws and policies in education in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination falls short in changing cultural attitudes and values and in making education compulsory for every child, which means guardians are not compelled to send their children, especially girls, to school. The report also said that ‘sexual harassment in schools is rampant’ and there is no written education policy on harassment in the education sector.

1.6 Summary of findings

The literature indicates that low literacy levels and lack of education in women and girls can affect the development of a country by influencing poverty levels and health, particularly child mortality, reproductive health and maternal health. Programmes instigated to improve literacy, enrolment of girls in school, to pay school fees/stipends and to improve livelihood skills such as those in Bangladesh have demonstrated an improvement in health, especially related to fertility rates, delayed marriage and contraceptive use. Other studies have shown a decrease in child mortality the more educated a woman is- this is due to greater immunisation uptake, greater dietary diversity therefore less malnutrition, better sanitary practices, better knowledge of PMTCT and better use of ITNs for the prevention of Malaria.

In relation to the Malawi constitution; gender, health and education policy objectives; the Beijing Platform for Action; the Millennium Development Goals and the principles of promoting health and in tandem with the Government, more needs to be done in changing societal attitudes towards the value of females. Some of the ways of doing this, especially in remote rural areas, are to promote their empowerment, improve the quality of education, to increase financial resources for education such as scholarships to girls and by addressing low retention and high drop out rates. Innovative strategies are required such as non formal education for girls who don't attend school [AGLIT²⁵ and Hogg A. et al 2005²⁶]. There will be limited impact on girl's health practices without the participation of the wider community.

This project in Namitembo, which initially is to pay for the education fees of secondary school girls that have dropped out due to inability to pay school fees, pregnancy, marriage, childbirth, and poor attitudes to girl's education by parents, is being instigated with a view to sensitising communities and raising general awareness of the problem both within the rural community and in the town. Like in the Bangladesh programme it is anticipated that enrolment figures will go up, drop out figures will decline but this alone will not be enough to improve literacy rates. So through evolving objectives, the project will adapt to the needs of the community. In the near future, it is hoped that through small projects such as this, the quality of education will be raised, secondary education will become free, education will become compulsory, the girl/boy ratio will be improved and girls and women will reap the benefits of education such as greater empowerment,

improved access to better health, greater autonomy and decision-making skills which are all linked to fertility control.

1.7 Purpose of this paper

Education is currently a burning media issue in resource poor countries. It is increasingly becoming recognised that an uneducated population, especially girls and women hinders progress and development and health.

Not enough resources are being directed towards quality education in countries like Malawi. It is therefore important for civil society, faith based organisations, The Human Rights Commission, NGO's, think tanks, pressure groups, CBO's and other stakeholders to raise awareness, keep it a burning media issue, sensitise communities and use research based evidence to influence policy, not only at national level but at grass roots level as well.

This paper also illustrates how public health is influenced by a myriad of external factors and that if more money was to be directed towards prevention (in this case educating girls), less would need to be spent on the symptoms (such as high child mortality, maternal mortality and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.)

The purpose of this paper is therefore to provide advice to the policy makers and to help to decide on an appropriate course of action using participatory approaches to identify the problem and possible solutions to girls dropping out of school in a rural area of Malawi.

Namitembo Parish, in Zomba District is situated at the bottom of the Great Rift Valley, at the base of the Zomba Plateau range of mountains. The nearest town is Zomba, 25km away which requires climbing the mountain either by foot or by four wheeled drive vehicle. The roads are inaccessible especially during the rainy season (December to April). Even four wheeled drive vehicles have no guarantee of successfully completing the journey as bridges are often washed away and roads become seas of mud.

As the Malawi government provides free primary schooling to all children, in primary schools the school attendance of girls and boys is the roughly the same and attendance by both sexes is dependant on distance from school, the household's need for child labour, the child's interest in school and the cost to the parents of 'free' schooling. The majority (81%) attends primary school but secondary school attendance ratios are very poor. Children of Secondary school age in urban areas are three times more likely to go to secondary school than their peers in rural areas. ² These figures are reflected in Namitembo. By the time pupils reach standard 5-8 where they do exams to move to secondary school, the girls have started to drop out heavily. This can be attributed to the relatively late age they start school, the onset of puberty and early pregnancy and marriage and the fact that in the eyes of society they have done enough education- it is time to settle down and have a family. Standard 5 is therefore a stage that could be focused on in terms of health and civic education

Namitembo parish in Chingale, covers 40 square miles with a population of around 16,000, within Chingale which has a population of 27,350 (according to Namitembo parish, latest figures are probably nearer 70,000).(see map, figure 4.) Similar to the rest of Malawi, more than 50% of the population is under 15. There are seven Catholic primary

schools and two Local Education Authority schools, 2 Catholic secondary schools and 1 government secondary school with a total student population of around 9,000. According to the Namitembo parish report 2005, although the government supplies and pays the teachers, the parish is responsible for the maintenance and expansion of the schools and to supply the teacher's houses, an ongoing task. The more teachers' houses they put up, the more teachers they receive, but in the lower classrooms, it is not uncommon to have one teacher trying to teach 300 children. Namitembo is no exception to the high drop out rate in Malawian schools. The teacher pupil ratio drops dramatically the nearer you get to the last class. In some cases only 40 or so remain in Standard 8.

Education is not compulsory, so the age range is wide, with children starting at age 8 and finishing in Standard 8 when they are 20 years or older. Very few go to secondary school as early marriage and family needs see many taking up subsistence farming.

For secondary school they are required to pay approximately \$25 per year which rules out many in a rural area such as Namitembo. "Quite simply, they do not have the money. Sending a child or two to secondary school requires real sacrifice and enlightenment on the part of the parents" (Namitembo news network 2005/6)³⁹

Secondary Schools in Namitembo

The two community day secondary schools in Chingale area are St Bridget's and Namitembo CDSS. (See appendices for photographs). Namitembo CDSS currently has places for 200 pupils. At the time of writing, 198 places were filled but only 47 places were filled by girls (24%) - the remainder had dropped out.

Each class from Form 1-4 has a number of absentees per day.

The schools are currently being rehabilitated by the parish with donor money. (St Bridget's sister parish in Seattle).

Whilst the school has government provided teachers, there are only one or two female teachers in the whole area. Voluntary teachers from overseas come on 3-6 month visits.

The Trade and Agriculture School

To help the government fulfill its poverty alleviation programme, a policy agenda for national development, Zomba Diocese decided to establish its own Trade Schools in Thondwe and Chingale- the objective was not only to help the government but also to help school leavers and school drop-outs in these areas to have an opportunity to further their education after secondary school.

Father Owen O'Donnell and Namitembo parish have a vision to improve education in the Chingale area. With donor money from their sister parish in Seattle and the Zomba diocese, they have worked on improving the building infrastructure- classrooms, teachers' houses, a new road and the building of a trade and agriculture school to include tutors houses, workshops, boarding facilities and a grinding mill. The main challenges faced were the running of the two main courses; computer studies and carpentry and joinery without adequate learning and teaching materials and the prevalent poverty in the area which made it difficult for potential students to pay the annual discounted figure of K18, 000 in school fees (Namitembo Trade school report 2005).⁸

Another problem identified was a gender disparity in enrolment and not enough girls and boys achieved the minimum grades to enter into computer studies and carpentry which require an MSCE level of mathematics.

The trade school also has tailoring and technical drawing courses.

The places at the school are not being filled despite the offer of paying the fees for young women, which suggests that lack of funds is not the only barrier to their further education.

Almost 75% of those currently in the school are from other areas of Malawi; suggesting there are other reasons as to why the people of Chingale area do not in general value education- It is an isolated area traditionally ignored by successive governments and ill served by its MPs. There is also matrilineal and matrilineal social organisation, a reluctance in the past and present to make use of educational facilities, either mission or government, by the Yao chiefs and the long distances to schools and/or scarcity of schools even after the free primary education declaration.⁸

World Vision

World vision is an NGO with an office in Chingale. They have been involved in paying school fees in the area and sensitising the community on health issues. In times of famine, funds are often diverted into crisis situations. Some of the girls who had dropped out had previously had their fees paid by World Vision.

2.2 Context

In deciding how to interact with stakeholders, the characteristics of the main actors were analysed [Table 2.]. In order to better understand the culture and context of Namitembo, a total of 6 visits were made involving an over night stop- over on 3 occasions. The author acknowledges that when moving between urban/rural and developed/developing country contexts there are bound to be constraints in terms of interpersonal communication. An

outsider may miss subtle verbal and non verbal clues which can affect the success of the analysis. As recommended by Ford and Sporne [1988]⁴⁰ the project coordinators used key informants who were able to mediate and transcend cultural positions. The parish priest, Father Owen O'Donnell who is fluent in Chichewa and has lived there for 25 years has a deep understanding of the ways of the people and has been invaluable in interpreting the information and data gathered. The female secondary school teacher, Agatha Kalawa has also been able to transcend cultural barriers through interpreting and relaying messages to the community as well as being a change agent. This has helped to minimise biases and misunderstandings. Enoch Mateyu, a World Vision development facilitator has also been a mediator between the committee and the villages further a field.

The analysis took place at a local level by a mixed team of insiders and outsiders and most of the stakeholders were reached individually. The representative for the Ministry of Education was Mr. John Ghocho, who is the headmaster of Namitembo CDSS. Interviews with health care workers in the area were taken as representing the Ministry of Health. The analysis was conducted by the author, with the support of the key insider informants to provide an objective view of stakeholder interests and positions.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using community committee meetings and informal group discussions, contemporaneous notes were taken at each event and recorded in the form of minutes and transcripts (see annex). A stakeholder table could then be constructed.

2.4 Stakeholder analysis

Table 2. Stakeholder analysis for Ubwino Wa Amayi, Namitembo 2006

Stakeholders	Characteristics/ involvement in issue	Interest in issue	Influence /power	Position	Impact on stake holder
Namitembo Parish	Oversee development projects in area based on problem identification and need	High	High 4.	Supportive	Medium
The Community Committee	Realize that school drop out is a problem and see results in every day life such as lack of teachers, few nurses etc.	High	Medium 3- 4.*	Supportive	Medium
Group Village Headman	Is very concerned that girls who have been given an opportunity are unable to take it up	High	High 4.	Supportive	Medium
School girls	Some would rather be at school but can't afford it and are prevented from doing so	Medium	Low 1.	Non mobilized	High
Women (as represented by TBAs, Church elders, mothers, wife of chief, teachers etc	Agree that girls should go to school and wait to have children	High	Medium 2-3.	Supportive	Medium
Donors, sponsors, benefactors	Philanthropic, want to see the country develop, understand the impact on health.	High	Medium 2-3.	Supportive	Low
School teachers/ head master	See the results at ground level. Want to teach more girls. Interests of community at heart	High	Medium 3.	Supportive	High

Parents and/or husbands	Need labour at home, central to success of project	Low	High 5.	Non mobilized	High
Ministry of Education	Oversee all education projects, have decreed gender equality	Medium	High 3-4.	Supportive	Low
World Vision	Active in the area, previously involved in paying school fees	High	Medium 3.	Supportive	Low
St Bridget's parish, Seattle	Sister parish. Send money for building schools and staff houses	High	Medium 3	Supportive	Low

* Relative priority of influence/power. Most power=5, least=1

Table 3 Importance/influence matrix for Ubwino Wa Amayi, Namitembo 2006

High importance/low influence	High importance/high influence
A School girls/young women drop outs Donors/Charity School teachers/ Principal Women	B Namitembo mission Parents/husbands Community Group Village Headman GVH
C World Vision, St Bridget's Parish Seattle	D Ministry of education Ministry of Health
Low importance/low influence	Low importance/ high influence

Table 4 Stakeholder table. Impact on actor and interest in issue. Namitembo 2006

Primary stakeholders	Interests	Likely Impact of activity	Interest/ Priority
School girls/young women	Improved education and livelihood skills	+	4
Ubwino Wa Amayi, charity	Achievement of objectives	+	1
School teachers/Principle	Results, achievement of education objectives	+	3
Namitembo Mission	Achievement of complimentary objectives	+	2
Parents/husbands	Control of valuable resource (young women)	-/+	5
Village headman/chiefs	Interest in village matters	+	3
Community	Want to see more nurses/teachers	+	4
Secondary Stakeholders			
Donors/benefactors	Achievement of complimentary objectives	+	3
Ministry of Education	Achievement of policy objectives in education	+	4
Ministry of Health including Dept of Gender	Achievement of MoH and Gender equity objectives	+	4
Minor Stakeholders			
St Bridget's Parish USA	Achievement of complimentary objectives	+	3
World Vision	Achievement of complimentary objectives	+	3

Relative priority of interest: High priority = 1 Low priority=5
 +/- is the likely impact of the activity on the stakeholder.

Tables 2-4 are based on selected methods of stakeholder analysis taken from the DFID tools for Development [2002].³⁸ They helped the charity to assess relative priority of interest, impact on actors and the influence matrix shows relative locations of various stakeholders, those in boxes A,B and C being the key stakeholders who can significantly influence the activity. For instance, Box A shows that those with high importance but low influence are school girls, donors, school teachers and women. This group requires special initiatives if their interests are to be protected. Box B stakeholders, Namitembo mission, parents, husbands, the community and the GVH are also of high importance and can significantly influence the success of the project. A good working relationship needs to be ensured with those in Box B.

Box C stakeholders are of low priority and are not the focus of the activity. Those in Box D are stakeholders with high influence, whose interests are not the target of the activity but can affect the outcome. These stakeholders could constitute a killer risk by blocking the activity.

2.5 Option and sensitivity analysis

Policy alternatives and strategic options.

In the project planning phase, a problem tree was used in the situation analysis. It helped to generate ideas, focus on the problem, priorities and objectives. The first meeting in May 2006 included the representative of Namitembo parish, Father Owen O'Donnell who had first identified the problem, a voluntary teacher from the US who was seeing the problem first hand in the schools; Agatha Kalawa, a secondary school teacher at

Namitembo CDSS, who was willing to be the community liaison person; Mrs. Mary O'Neill a nurse/ Montessori teacher and entrepreneur and Diane Calisse an MPH student. The focal problem was selected by brainstorming. Ideas were generated at this stage. Consensus was achieved as everybody agreed that gender disparity in secondary school was a problem which had a variety of causes and effects. From this an objectives tree could be formulated into positive/desirable conditions and means-end relationships could be shown. (See problem tree analysis and objectives tree, Figures 5 and 6)

A range of alternative options for the policy could then be analysed. Some of the objectives were not feasible, such as poverty reduction and improved access, as these are beyond the scope of this project

Through stakeholder analysis, most of the stakeholders were identified and invited to each of the 6 meetings. A stakeholder table was produced (Table 4) which enabled the team to see who primary, secondary and minor stakeholders were (Tables 2 and 3.) From the tables it can be seen that those with the most at stake are the ones with little influence and power. Those with the most power in the community with regards to education of girls are parents and husbands. Those with the greatest influence are the village headmen and other community leaders such as TBAs, elder women, church/mosque leaders.

The forcefield matrix⁴² (Figure 7), shows how levels of influence and support can change over time and how some stakeholders can move from being non-mobilized to supportive. The matrix plots predicted changes in stakeholder positions. Over time, the group village headman (GVH) who has high influence could move from non-mobilised to supportive. Parents and husbands, who oppose their daughters/wives returning to school, could

through community sensitisation and with encouragement of the group village headman move from opposed to supportive. At the same time, whilst the support and activism of the current female teacher (ST) is high, there is always a chance that she may be moved to a different district by the MoE and her replacement may be non-mobilised with little influence.

Donors may have an interest in girl's education issues now and be willing to donate money but in the future they may find a new recipient for their philanthropy.

This analysis was useful as it identified opportunities to use peoples influence to further the goals of the charity and to develop alliances with the other stakeholders.

The Stakeholder Table (4) shows likely impact of the issue on the stakeholders. For all stakeholders there is likely to be a positive impact. For husbands and parents, the impact for them may be negative at first, but become positive in the long run.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

3.1 Consensus formation

Consensus formation was achieved as a result of community committee meetings, stakeholder analysis, problem and objectives trees, forcefield and influence matrices. Key people who would be the most powerful change agents were identified. The policy goals and objectives could then be stated and a logistical framework (log frame) constructed for planning and activity purposes as recommended by NORAD's handbook for objectives-oriented planning.⁴³

Figure 5 Problem tree analysis

This analysis shows positive/desirable conditions and means-end relationships.

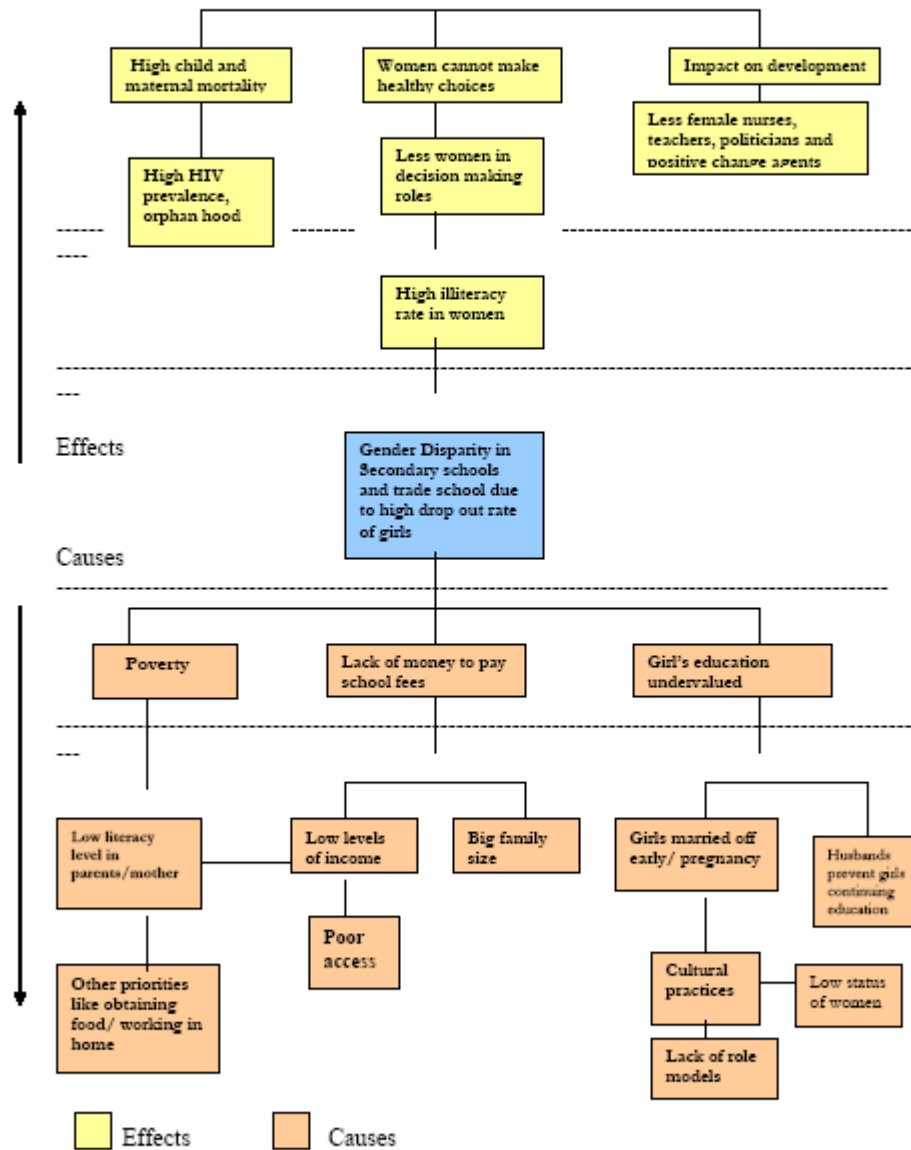


Figure 6 Objectives tree

This diagram shows a range of alternative options to be analysed for the policy.

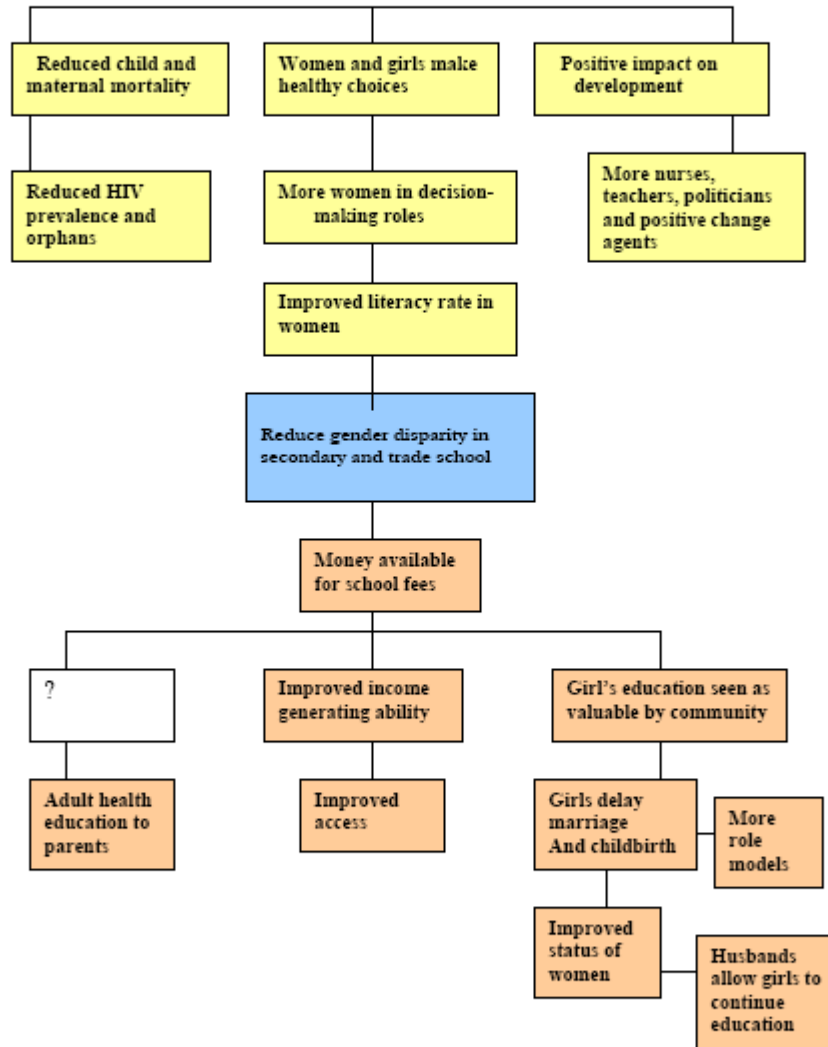
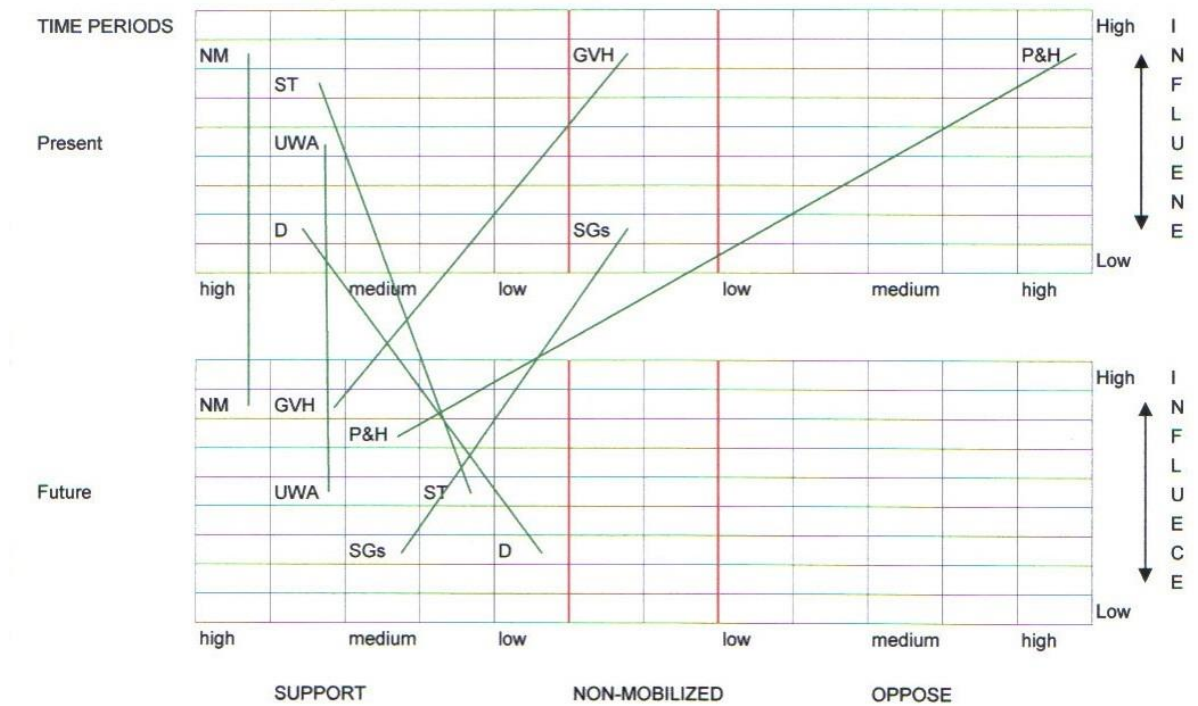


Figure 7 Forcefield Matrix.

The forcefield matrix⁴², shows how levels of influence and support can change over time and how some stakeholders can move from being non-mobilized to supportive.



Key

- NM Namitembo Mission
- SGs School Girls
- ST School Teacher
- GVH Group Village Headman
- UWA Ubwino Wa Amayi
- P&H Parents and Husbands
- D Donors

Policy Goals of Ubwino Wa Amayi- Consensus formation

The following goals and objectives arose out of the community meetings that took place between October 2006 and May 2007.

- 1/ To fund school fees for 50 girls at secondary school for 4 years and to fund Trade school fees for 25 girls for 3 years in order to reduce or eliminate gender disparity in secondary and tertiary education in the rural area of Namitembo.
- 2/ To sensitise the community about the importance of girls education through community dialogue and stakeholder discussion in a gender sensitive way
- 3/ To provide opportunities for role models to visit the area for talks and activities (career days) to benefit the youth, girls and boys.

Rationale

Women and girls are more often socially, culturally, economically and legally vulnerable than boys. Socio-culturally, they are taught to be subservient to men and boys and are therefore much more vulnerable to abuse. Economically, they generally have lower levels of education, so have less access to better paid employment, which means they are less likely to be able to avoid abusive situations. Women and girls are usually less aware of their human rights and drop out of school at a greater rate than boys, resulting in higher illiteracy and health problems such as increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS, a high maternal mortality ratio, malnutrition and high child mortality.

3.2 Objectives

- To improve girl: boy ratios in classrooms and keep it that way by 75% by 2010.

- To raise awareness in the community of Namitembo and in the wider community about the negative impacts of high school drop out in girls by 2007
- To raise sufficient money through fundraising events to cover all expenses for funding the girls/young women to continue their education for the first phase by January 2007
- To identify a variety of role models to provide good examples for school children in Namitembo by June 2007

A Logistical framework was then compiled for the implementation phase and activity strategy of the project.

3.3 Proposed logical framework analysis

In order to achieve the project goal and to formulate a plan of action, a logical framework with stakeholder participation was used to facilitate comprehensive and detailed planning for tangible and measurable outcomes.

Table 5 Plan of Action and Implementation

Goal	Objectively verifiable indicators OVI	Means of verification MOV	Assumptions
1. To reduce poverty and improve health in the community of Namitembo, Zomba District, Southern Malawi	Community of Namitembo 50% improvement in Health by 2015	HMIS statistics for Namitembo and surrounding areas	Improved literacy and higher education attainment in girls reduces negative health impacts
Purpose/ Rationale To improve female literacy by increasing attendance at secondary school and trade school thereby reducing gender	Higher % of girls passing MSCE by 2010 Female attendance at school improved by 50% by 2008 By 2010 gender	Examination results Attendance records Yearly trade school reports	Schools have enough teachers and resources Volunteers will always be available

disparity	disparity at schools in Namitembo improved by 75%		
Outputs 1. School fees for 50 girls are paid for 4 years 2. Trade school fees are paid for 25 girls for 3 years 3. Gender disparity reduced in secondary and Trade Schools Namitembo	OVI No. of form 4 MSCE graduates 50 more girls able to complete secondary education by 2010 25 more girls eligible and able to learn a trade at trade school by 2010 Disparity at schools improved by 75% by 2010	MOV Examination results -Observation -School records -Statistics -Reports -Class records -Yearly trade school reports no. of female enrolment in trade school courses that require MSCE	Assumptions Funding girls will keep them at school or encourage them to learn a trade
Activities 1.1 Identify stakeholders and conduct meetings with leaders at Namitembo 1.2 Procure funding from donors and sponsors through fundraising activities. 1.3. Set up charity, committee bank account under name Ubwino wa Amayi. And promotion of charity. 2.1 sensitise community and families through stakeholder meetings, teachers and church. 2.2 Conduct quarterly and yearly progress reports, evaluate achievements. Keep donors informed, conduct overall evaluation, revise plans when necessary.	Inputs 1.1 Transport costs and refreshments K55,000 1.2 K8,000 per girl per year for 50 girls secured from fundraising K400,000 Trade school fees for 25 girls K18,000 for 3 years K1,350,000 1.3 Admin and promotional material K100,000 2.1 Transport costs to Namitembo K55,000 2.2 Admin, report writing, transport, email, printing etc K60,000 Total K2,020,000	Fund balance Account records Promotional materials available Opportunities for marketing capitalized Community awareness high Attendance records Account records Number of girls completing 4 years at secondary schools and 3 years at Trade and agriculture school	Sufficient funds raised to finance the project

CHAPTER 4. DISCUSSION

From the stakeholder analysis it can be seen that some stakeholders are facilitative and other impede the project goals. Parents and husbands of the girls that had dropped out of schools and the trade school were found to oppose the girls returning to their studies. Reasons for this are “They did not want their wives to be more educated than them” or “They need the mother to look after the baby and the home”. This information enabled the charity to reformulate their objectives.

The results of the problem tree and objectives tree analysis are on page 40 and 41. From these, possible alternative options were identified. The main option was to fund girls who had dropped out of school for 4 years until MSCE and fund girls with MSCE through the trade school to learn a trade such as carpentry, bricklaying, computer studies and tailoring. It was anticipated that there would be more girls than the charity was able to fund but it soon became evident after a few stakeholder meetings that the ‘drop outs’ would need to be actively sought and encouraged. The other options were to improve income- generating ability, use role models and conduct adult education. Whilst these could be incorporated later through evolving objectives, the charity did not have the scope to do this initially as they were constrained by limited financial, human, geographical and time resources.

Like the Bangladesh programme, it has become increasingly evident that rural areas in Malawi such as Namitembo would also benefit from focusing on primary school girls especially in Standard 5-8, as this seems to be a critical time when a lot of drop out occurs.

The lessons learned from the Bangladesh study can help similar projects such as ‘Ubwino Wa Amayi’ formulate their project goals, objectives and activities. As in Bangladesh, the offer of bursaries has improved enrolment in the secondary schools and there are now 50 girls back in school that would not otherwise have been there.

The project has also raised awareness and sensitised the community about the issue of girl’s education.

In Bangladesh, husbands did not support their wives at first when they were given opportunities to learn livelihood skills and get micro credit, as they felt threatened by it. Indeed spousal violence went up. But once the benefits to them became evident they became more supportive.^{44, 45}

4.1 Limitations

Apart from time and geographical constraints, other factors limited the results in this policy report. Although the situation is favourable, with complimentary projects taking place (building of the trade school and an emphasis by Namitembo parish on improving education), there is always the barrier of language and culture which restricts interpersonal communication with all players. This was addressed as best as possible by engaging people who are able to transcend cultural barriers to reduce biases and misunderstandings. Even so, there was still a certain amount of suspicion on the part of the community as to how these key people got their power, especially relating to selection of girls who had dropped out. (See also Bangladesh study). These constraints may have affected the results of the analysis.

Despite being used in a limited way, the stakeholder analysis proved a useful tool in which to analyse the actors and stakeholders, partly due to language barriers and time

consuming translating. With more foresight, a visioning workshop ³⁸ would have been useful at the beginning.

The author acknowledges that stakeholder analysis can mislead as it is only as good as the information collected and judgments can be subjective. Trying to describe and predict conflicts and interests in a matrix can over simplify complex situations. However, it did provide insight into how the process could have been done better which is the whole purpose of a living document like this.

Some of the findings in the analysis did not end up in the policy at this stage. The literature shows that paying bursaries are not necessarily the best way to solve drop out rates. Other innovative ways such as informal education, using health messages, adult education of parents, focusing on boys, aiming messages at standard 5 pupils and setting up an early learning facility to enable those young women with toddlers and babies to return to school, could have been used. Through evolving objectives these could be included in the future.

A small project like this cannot hope to have any impact on national indicators. Reducing poverty and improving health may seem rather an ambitious goal but what it does is slowly help to introduce change in a remote rural area otherwise neglected by new policies instituted in the city.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

In line with the Malawi constitution, MDG's, the Malawi gender, education for all (EFA) education and health policies and evidence from the literature this policy was formulated for a small charity called Ubwino Wa Amayi.(for the good of the women).

Community participation was the cornerstone in problem identification and stakeholder analysis to identify 50 girls that had dropped out of formal education at various stages for reasons beyond their control, to encourage them re enroll in secondary school. Also to enable 25 girls to be enrolled in the trade school to learn livelihood skills such as carpentry, tailoring and computing, previously the domain of boys.

Through an analysis of the situation and stakeholders, real needs were identified such as lack of money within families to pay school fees, lack of motivation from parents and husbands, early marriage and childbirth. Consensus was built through regular stakeholder meetings and evolving objectives in the identification and project design phase.

The overall goal is to reduce poverty and improve health in the long run in the Namitembo area. The objectives are to reduce gender disparity in the secondary schools and the trade school, encourage girls to go back to school by removing one of the barriers to them continuing i.e. insufficient money to pay fees, to raise awareness of the benefits of educating girls to the community and to bring the problem to wider attention through fundraising.

From the analysis, the charity was able to produce the log frame necessary for the project's successful implementation and evaluation.

5.1 Proposed monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is essential to review the effectiveness of the project; to establish whether the goal and purpose have been achieved; to examine if there have been any unintended impacts; for accountability to donors and to learn lessons from the experience thus improving future performance. The following M&E can be carried out:-

- School reports
- Strategic reviews such as Output-to-Purpose Review (OPR) - Address any key strategic issues that need attention if the activity or intervention is to achieve its purpose and contribute towards achieving the goal. Assess progress against agreed objectives.
- Mid term review- assess progress at delivering outputs, estimate likelihood that purpose and outputs will be achieved using clear and concise reporting (e.g. logframe). DFID, in their Tools for Development paper (Chapter 12) recommend a format for activity-output-reviews and outputs-to-purpose-reviews. This format could be used by Ubwino Wa Amayi and provides information about progress against each indicator, comments and recommendations and a score for likely achievement.
- End of term review.
- Impact assessment with stakeholder participation.
- Internal reporting- compare actual progress with what was planned on the log frame.
- Monitor inputs.

- Activity and monitoring reports to Donors (newsletters, treasurer's reports, minutes)
- Project completion report which will provide a way to assess long term impact several years down the line.
- Evaluation and lesson learning-how could it have been done better?
- An evaluation study could be carried out at a later date. (retrospective)
- Participatory monitoring and evaluation, in line with participatory methods used in situation analysis to help people identify their own indicators for success, evaluate themselves and empower them to take control.

5.2 Addendum

Although it will be at least 10 years before evaluation will show any benefits to the community, early findings from the implementation of the project indicate that paying fees for girls does not necessarily ensure their return to school. For young women who have left school due to early marriage and child birth, the husbands and parents do not support their return to school. Whilst 75 girls seems a small number, it has been difficult to recruit that many. Husbands are concerned that their wives will be more educated than them and parents fear they will have to look after the babies and toddlers whilst their daughter goes to lessons.

It was difficult to find girls with an MSCE in the area that would qualify them to take a course such as computing at the trade school. Carpentry and joinery are traditionally male dominated and although there are one or two girls enlisted, typical females would not be

attracted to these courses even if they were given a bursary. The trade school numbers are only 6 out of the 25 bursaries offered.

The charity has evolving objectives and due to these early findings, ways are being sought to include husbands in the education programme, a careers day is being conducted in mid July 2007 with role models, including men, going to Namitembo to do motivational talks on their line of work and there are plans for a potential early learning facility/crèche to be started in the vicinity of Namitembo CDSS. These tie in with government education policy of increasing early learning facilities in the country.

The community stakeholder meetings have been very useful and have helped to sensitise the villagers especially with the group village headman on board.

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Internet resources

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Campaign for Female Education | www.camfed.org |
| DFID | www.dfid.gov.uk |

Eldis gender reporter	eldis-gender@ids.ac.uk www.eldis.org/gender
Eldis gateway to development IDS health and development information	eldishealthsystems@lyris.ids.ac.uk
Eldis on Disc Issue No.1 November 2006	
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	www.liverpool.ac.uk/lstm/research
Pubmed central	www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query
Oxford Journals	www.oxfordjournals.org
SDNP	www.sdn.org.mw/gender
Siyanda	www.siyanda.org
Ubwino Wa Amayi	www.ubwino.org
United Nations	www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/poverty

APPENDICES AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Minutes of policy formation stakeholder meetings

Ubwino Wa Amayi
For the good of the women, educate the girls

Minutes of the second meeting of the Ubwino Wa Amayi committee held at Namitembo on Thursday 12th October 2006 at 13.45

Present:

Father Owen, Mary O'Neill, Diane Calisse, Enoch Mateyu (World Vision development facilitator), Agatha Kalawa (teacher)

R.C- Sr Hilda Goneka, Sr Chibwana (Nbo teacher), Berita Mpakate, Regina Thomas, Agnes Thomas, Anna Nahe, Zenobia Mgunda, Dorothy Kasowere, Mai Nastazio, (Mai Tembo, ex head, Teaching Service Commission (08862222))

Muslim- Mai Baison Mitumbiri, Mai Achuma Anika, Mfumu Aifa, Mai Salima, Mai Ramus, Mina Rajabu, Austin Malinda (group village headman Mitumbiri), Kandemanje Kasimu, Yawadi Yasini-Ifa.

CCAP- Nesta Pjirima, Betty James, Steveria Matawere, Meliam Julias (parent), Annie Makumbi (student),

Father Owen O'Donnell chaired the meeting and spoke in fluent Chichewa. Also present to interpret was Enot Mathias a World Vision Development Facilitator.

Father Owen asked all those present to introduce themselves.

He explained to the community representatives what problem had been identified i.e girls leaving school early and gave a brief background about why the charity Ubwino Wa Amayi had been set up. This received some applause from the floor.

Mary read out the vision, mission, aim and working of the foundation and this also received a round of applause.

Father Owen then asked for comments from the floor.

Comments from the floor: Transcript

Mary asked, “Did the people think this was a good idea?” Response “Oh yes! Very good” and applause. She then asked for some input on as to how to go about it in a fair way.

The teacher said, “They appreciate with brilliant idea and acknowledge that girls have dropped out. Some are orphans and had early marriage due to having no parents”

The teacher also said should come up with good selection criteria, should not rush but should find out those who are motivated and willing to go to school. The group should agree on how many from each village, must make good choice, need for prudence.

The Mother Superior added, “We should involve parents so that those grandchildren benefit.” Conduct more awareness meetings to sensitise parents.

Diane asked, “Who can you identify to sensitise parents?” The reply was that before we start we should have a committee, which should include the clergy, church leaders, village headmen, and women that stay with the community.

We all agreed with this.

Another question, “Will we need staff?” we replied that at first we were relying on voluntary workers, as the project was new and starting small.

Another question, “Is it just girls or boys?” we replied “Just for girls and quoted the national illiteracy figures and the statistics from their own schools to illustrate the gender imbalance.

Comment from the floor “Some girls are school going but have problems paying the fees what about those?” we replied that we hoped that the girls who truly needed it would be the ones to benefit. (Diane and Mary had raised this concern whilst setting up the charity. We hoped that in solving one problem we were not creating another. We did not want to start a trend in girls dropping out!)

Father Owen came back in to the room and said in Chichewa that he thought a committee should be formed. This decision was therefore unanimous.

Another question from the teacher, “Stress on point to be careful on selection of people to benefit from the fund. For instance, if a teacher is keeping five orphans, would one be able to benefit from the fund?” we said yes providing they fulfilled the selection criteria and there was no girl more deserving.

Enot Mathias from world vision did most of the translating.

Father Owen explained that we should elect a committee here and now.

But the teacher again said we must not rush. It was agreed that we needed a rep from the primary school and when it was asked if there should be men on the committee we said men were essential on the committee.

It was then asked “How big should the committee be” and one stated that there should be “representatives of all churches”. We agreed, and that is why we wanted a

multidenominational meeting today so that the whole of Chingale can benefit regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation.

A further committee meeting for elections was set for Sat 28th October and we arranged another stakeholder meeting for Thurs 16th November.

Diane asked, “What benefits do you think the community will get from keeping girls at school?”

The first reply from the teacher was “poverty reduction- girls will be able to get employment and with their earnings will be able to assist their parents.”

Another comment was “This area will be developed and in a position to help others- money circulation”.

The Catholic sister said “Once girls are educated, they will be able to abstain from immoral behaviour therefore prevalence of HIV will be reduced.”

Diane said “what about Health?”

One replied that “once educated, hygiene will improve therefore health status of herself and children.”

Another said “Once educated will be able to reduce malnutrition and give the right food to children”

Other comments -“An illiterate person cannot know”

“Once a girl is educated, some of them will be Nurses so nation at large will benefit”

Diane asked the male representatives of the Muslim community what they thought. They replied that their silence was an indication of their approval for this project.

We were then asked from the floor “How are we fundraising” Mary and Diane explained how we were raising money. Through charity events like the Dublin Marathon (1000 euros was raised from well-wishers in Ireland), promotional evenings, presentations to the business community in Blantyre, an international Christmas tea party and the proceeds from St Patrick’s night will go directly to this charity. Pledges from organisations in UK such as the

(Soroptimist International Wolverhampton, we are a group of professional women who are working both at home and overseas to promote the cause of young women and girls. More details of our international organisation can be found at www.Soroptimistinternational.org.) and more pledges are coming in.

Income generating ideas

Mary explained that we also would like to see the community themselves generate income for a community fund that would pay to keep their own girls at school. Mary showed some examples of income generating crafts that could be made to sell in town and abroad. Examples were beaded necklaces, and baskets of inspirational messages.

Father Owen then thanked the participants and wound up the meeting at 1600.

We all shook hands with everybody and said Zikomo!

Post meeting discussion-

World vision paid for girls, but then had to reprioritise money to buy food during the food shortage. Some funds were then not available for needy girls.

They paid for 126 girls in the whole of Malawi. He mentioned the area development committee who assist you to benefit from the school fee fund.

P.S Other considerations:

- Voluntary workers from Blantyre
- Teachers for decision-making and leadership skills
- Ideas for crafts for income generating.
- Pamet could teach them how to make recycled paper for instance.
- What about recycled glass?
- Fabric painting as an adjunct to the tailoring course at the trade school.

Ubwino Wa Amayi.

Minutes of Namitembo Stakeholder meeting 5 3rd May 2007

Self introductory session:

Adola Ziko Luwezi- committee member Ubwino Wa Amayi

Chuma Anika Mitumbiri- TBA

Agatha Kalawa- Teacher

John Ghochi- Headmaster Namitembo CDSS

Group Village headman Mitumbiri (GVH)- looking after 20 other Village headmen.

Alfred Muliya- Representing husbands. He is also repeating form 4.

Sister Hilda- Teacher/committee member

Father Owen- Chairperson

Mary O'Neill, Diane Calisse- representatives of the charity

Siobhan and Mary- Donors from Ireland.

Diane took the floor and explained the purpose of the meeting which was to ascertain the reason for lack of female applicants to the Trade school despite scholarships being made available by the charity, to identify other challenges and see other points of view. Agatha and Father Owen translated.

1/ Only 4 of the 25 trade school places had been taken up by girls. This is because most girls do not have the MSCE necessary for the more technical courses. The less technical courses such as carpentry, bricklaying and joinery are not the type of courses girls are usually attracted to. Husbands and parents of girls with children are reluctant to allow the girl to go back to school because they feel it will affect them, the baby/toddler will be neglected as there is no one to look after the child and in some instances, husbands do not want their young wives to be more educated than them.

Question- why do husbands not want wives to go to school? Alfred (on behalf of husbands)

Says "Thank you for introducing the foundation".

"The problems married women are encountering are from especially those men who are not employed. There are several problems emanating from the husbands. They do not understand why women should go back to school and the importance of education. The girls are therefore not assisted by grandparents and husbands."

2/ Brainstorming to see what can be done about that.

GVH says- "One way is to summon a meeting of husbands and parents of girls- because parents themselves don't know the importance"

Diane -"Can that be done?" GVH "Yes it is possible"

Mary says "By doing for e.g. a career day?" bringing in role models "can they identify anybody themselves?"

Agatha- "First thing should be to call them for a meeting before a careers day.

Diane- “If there is no one to look after the child(ren) what can be done?”

GVH and Agatha- “We Africans believe in extended families, we need to find out why families are not willing to assist the girl by looking after the children. GVH will assist to speak to the parents, husbands and Grandparents at the meeting.

Diane “The govt in their education policy want to improve opportunities for early learning- is this happening in Namitembo?

Agatha “ people start it as business but then it collapses, they do not last”

Father Owen- “ Cadecom are subsidizing simple grass structures- seems that parents were not happy- level not good enough”

Diane- “what if there was an early learning facility in Namitembo for those girls with children?”

Agatha translates- “people would be amenable if it was in the near vicinity.”

3/Mary suggests a round table discussion for people to voice ideas/reservations.

Anika says-“The meeting with the parents would be best- they will state how they could be assisted”

Agatha says “Yes meeting with role models, talking to parents, encouraging them. Those that have developed and gone from the village to tell them that being in form 4 is not the end of an education. Also Males should attend.

Sister Hilda agrees

Mr. Ghochi gives an example of a girl who was impregnated by a teacher, he took her in and taught her and she also became a teacher.

Another comment on how to get families to agree to send girls to school is by visiting them and encouraging them in their homes.

Agatha- “better to encourage their husbands- husband also didn’t go to school because of lack of fees”

Father Owen- A solution would be if the wife got educated, then her money could be used to pay school fees for husband.

Father Owen- “when it was first announced in church to get free education people showed interest. Many came to register but only 22 came. They dropped out before going to school. Need to find root cause of this.

8 students joined carpentry, now there are only 2 despite those with only JC can come to carpentry and joinery- even though it’s free they don’t come.

Agatha- “first see if they really are interested? Were told to tell husbands to see if they are happy- those who wanted to come to school became pregnant which shows husbands are not happy.”

John/Agatha and Owen- We should encourage those after completing secondary school to go to Trade school. The policy should be those we are funding in form4 now should be funded through trade school.

Mary said- “The girls don’t have to be pregnant- anyone as long as they are motivated”

Agatha- another way of reducing the drop out rate- when they register the committee should meet the candidate, husbands and parents to see if they are really interested- such a talk should take place.

Diane-“perhaps we should aim at primary before drop out” St4, 5, 6, 7, 8 ‘at risk’ girls can be identified’

GVH- reiterated the community grateful to charity for coming to area- will call a meeting for fellow chiefs for the good of the future. Hopefully will see a general improvement next time we come.

Next community meeting for parents and husbands: Thurs 10th May.

Careers Day for St Bridget’s and Namitembo CDSS- 5th or 12th July, end of term
Will come back in two weeks, Thurs 17th May to be clear on objectives, venue etc
In the mean time we will identify role models. e.g. Mai Tembo Bunda college

Owen ended the meeting at 15:15

Main points elicited from this meeting

1/ GVH will call meeting with parents and husbands to encourage them to take up offer of free girl’s education- it will benefit the families in the long run.

2/ The charity only wants to pay for motivated girls- if we haven’t filled the places now, we can work at community sensitization and fill the places later. The trade school places could be reserved for those in form 4 who come out with MSCE.

3/ It has occurred to us that our goal of getting girls with children back to school might have been taken too literally- being pregnant or with children is not a prerequisite for a scholarship- motivation is. For some of these it might be too late to go back into formal education. It might be better to target ‘at risk’ girls in primary school. Before they drop out.

4/The Careers day will provide a good way of encouraging parents/husbands and role models

5/ Boys are an important part of this campaign. They should be included in all our sensitization efforts including the careers day.

6/ An early learning facility in proximity to the school might improve uptake of trade school places.

Ubwino Wa Amayi

Minutes of meeting 6 on Thursday 17th may

Agatha thanked and welcomed the 5 ladies and one man to hear what they discussed at the meeting with parents and husbands on May 10th 2007.

Diane and Mary in receipt of the minutes taken down by Agatha.

Agatha summarized verbally what they had discussed below.

Many parents came but only one husband/spouse. Only 3 men. Agatha explained that it was because it was the tradition for women to attend meetings.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING WITH GUARDIANS AND SPOUSES OF UBWINO WA AMAYI BENEFICIARIES AND THE BENEFICIARIES THEMSELVES.

May 10th 2007 2pm.

One of the guardians, Mr. Damian Chidwala, opened the meeting with a prayer, Agatha welcomed Father Owen and everyone to the meeting. She called on participants to feel free and be able to contribute in the discussions. She called on Fr Owen who was chairperson of the meeting to make his opening remarks.

Fr Owen welcomed everyone and thanked them for their coming to attend the meeting.

- He explained the background of the organisation and its objectives.
- He was not happy with the response from the ladies and wanted to find out from guardians why those who were supposed to benefit from the org seemed not to be interested.
- He asked the guardians to encourage their subjects and friends to come and join the carpentry and bricklaying courses which will start very soon at Namitembo Trade and Agriculture school.

As Fr Owen was busy with other engagements, he left the meeting calling on guardians and beneficiaries to have a fruitful discussion and called on them to feel free and respond correctly to his concerns cited above. Agatha took on the chair when Fr Owen left and the following items were discussed.

A. Reasons why ladies not interested

- i/ They are not academically qualified
- ii/ Some men are reluctant to allow their spouses to go to school
- iii/early marriage has caused most ladies to have many children who need their constant care
- iv/ Relatives and friends are reluctant to take care of the beneficiaries children as they have their own children that need their care
- v/ Some ladies did not know that there is an opportunity for them to study especially at the trade school.

B. Problems student mothers face concerning their children and spouses

- i/ Some spouses and relatives are jealous of the student mothers
- ii/ Some student mothers behave badly towards their spouses and relatives therefore the idea of letting them to go to school is not welcomed.

Resolutions

- i/ It was agreed that responsible people like the spouses and guardians will be encouraged to take care of the children.
- ii/ when the issue about the nursery school was put forward to the participants, it was unanimously agreed to be a bright idea. This would solve the problem most students have. Spouses and guardians will never be burdened by the task of child nursing.

C. Performance of Students

Agatha asked spouses and guardians to take a leading role in encouraging these students to work hard in school by doing the following:

- a/ Giving them time to study and attend other school assignments e.g. homework and sports
- b/ Helping them in the performance of some household chores.

Any other Business

- Guardians thanked the organisation for coming up with the project of assisting young mothers to further their education and gain skills which will enable them to improve their livelihood.
- Guardians called on their subjects to use the golden opportunity and work hard and tirelessly towards achieving their intended goals, which is a brighter future.
- Students were also advised not to forget their role as a mother therefore to render their services to their children accordingly
- Students were also advised not to engage in love affairs because this will disturb their studies.

Conclusion

Agatha thanked the participants for their contributions and asked them to be mindful of all the issues that were discussed. She called on all the participants to implement all the resolutions that the meeting had come up with. She also called on the beneficiaries to grab the opportunity before them and use it wisely to enhance their livelihood.

A closing prayer was said by Mrs Kasowire, a committee member.

These minutes were then discussed by those present at the 17th May committee meeting. People were seen not to be showing interest because to travel, to buy anything, must have approval from husbands- al this because ladies are not working, therefore welcome the

idea because it will improve qualifications and give them chance to use skills and earn something at the end of the day.

On nobody to care for children, Fr Owen asked “why was this?”

Response- They feel many ladies do not qualify to come to trade school- they have primary certificate but left school early. Their husbands are not giving them the chance- if they come to school, everything will not go well at home.

-Many girls have got more than two children, therefore find it difficult to leave many.

Our culture influenced by your culture- people running away from responsibility of caring for children. Parents and husbands refuse to care simple because of jealousy. (the woman will think she is the boss). One lady stood up and shouted at the parents and said that they should look after children- they should not deny the chance.

Crux of the matter- no one to look after children therefore cannot come to school, husband has run away.

Agatha says “ we are living in a new era, it is time for us to wake up- not to stick to customs- ask men to help in household chores- teach boys from early age e.g. cooking, water collecting.”

“Girls should deny sexual relationships with other men until they finish their studies. If they have a sick child they must go to hospital with that child, not grandmother, they should not neglect that child.

Preparation for the big day

The Careers day has been scheduled for Thursday 5th July.

Mary asked “What type of woman would they like to see at the careers day?”

One comment is that they would like us to bring a lady down that is now doing fine after having a baby early- had left school because of it and then went back to school (at least 2 for witness).

Other comment- Men who are modern share household work and share a common goal working together.

Mary asked “which star do the girls admire?” No answer (Agatha says they are not really exposed) eg Tamara Mkandawire (TVM), Angel Bhima.

Action

- Source starter packs- (p.s discuss about shared equipment, particularly calculators and maths sets.) Hats, T shirts?
- Careers day- Microphone, PA
Food/lunch, drinks,
youth centre/big hall
music/drama

Points elicited

-Whilst looking through the application forms, we found the majority of girls wanted to be nurses- how can we capitalize on this? Can the trade school offer a pre-nursing course?

- If a girl does well at MSCE and wants to be a nurse, can we sponsor them?

- Girls don't have to be pregnant or with children- why have people latched on to this idea of girls with children instead of motivation being a prerequisite?

Photographs



Community stakeholder meeting



St Bridget's secondary school



Headmaster Mr. John Ghocho with teacher Agatha Kalawa and school girls at

Namitembo CDSS.



Form 4 girls in class are standing up to illustrate gender disparity



Father Owen O'Donnell with Ubwino girls



A girl taking carpentry