

DRAFT

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON EDUCATION BY MPATANISHI TAYARI FOR USAID/MALAWI EDUCATION SECTOR

I. INTRODUCTION

THE CHALLENGE

At present, Malawi's urban areas indicate an HIV/AIDS prevalence rate of nearly 26%, with rural areas having a prevalence around 12%. As a result of this growth in HIV prevalence and AIDS deaths, the number of orphans in Malawi is expected to grow exponentially in the next few years from 210,000 in 1998, with the expected number of children to experience loss of at least one parent to AIDS exceeding 700,000 in the year 2010.¹

Adult HIV/AIDS prevalence, and resulting orphan rates in Malawi are among the highest in the world, greatly effecting the most productive age group through disease and younger nationals through loss and despair.

Young men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 are particularly vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as over 46% of all new infections occur in this age group. Further within this age group, young female adolescents are most at risk to HIV infection with a prevalence rate sometime 4 – 6 times higher than that of their male counterparts.²

Alternatively, the overall prevalence rate of HIV is lowest among primary school aged youth between 5 and 14. It is with this group that prevention activities should be targeted, as they provide a special opportunity to affect the future course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic - and the future of Malawi.

PREVIOUS EFFORTS AT MITIGATING IMPACT

Serious national efforts at mitigating the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Malawi came years after the report of the first cases in 1985. It was early belief that the disease was a cause for the health sector to tackle alone, and many prevention activities centered around this area of society with little to no involvement of other sectors in both donor and national communities. Although recent breakthroughs in discussion and acknowledgement of HIV/AIDS have encouraged countries like Malawi to take a multi-sectoral approach to controlling the disease, these efforts will have less potency without similar multi-sector support and cooperation of other agencies in the nation.

Previous mitigation efforts have, indeed, been championed by the health sector, however, without the leadership and serious contribution of the education sector, they have been largely ineffectual. This section will outline previous efforts at influencing curriculum through HIV/AIDS and Life Skills education, and the brief effort of the Ministry of Education itself to organize a committee delving into the effect of HIV/AIDS in education.

¹ *Malawi's National Response to HIV/AIDS for 200-2004*; Strategic Planning Unit, National AIDS Control Program, Ministry of Health and Population, 2000.

² *Malawi's National Response to HIV/AIDS for 200-2004*; Strategic Planning Unit, National AIDS Control Program, Ministry of Health and Population, 2000.

A. *HIV/AIDS Education in Schools*

The original AIDS materials for primary schools which were prepared in the early 1990s did not have any link with the curriculum and were essentially ineffective. The material was additional to the syllabus and at the time of evaluation, teachers had not taught it properly because they thought it was not examinable. Although the materials were produced in large quantities, the distribution was not done in a systemic manner, further leaving many of the materials unused. Since 1993, a Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and UNFPA project has been ongoing to integrate population education into the school curriculum. The resulting AIDS curriculum has been integrated into the existing curriculum of other subjects being taught in standards 5-8, while the current standard 1-4 materials contain no AIDS education at all.³

In 1994, a second midterm plan was devised by the National AIDS control program and the Ministry of Health in an attempt to maximize multi-sector involvement in advocacy, planning, and monitoring of HIV/AIDS activities in Malawi. Following this national level advocacy and initiative, USAID conceived with other national stakeholders the AIDS Control and Prevention (AIDSCAP) Project through Family Health International. While the mission originally designed the utilization of the AIDSCAP Project to implement the AIDS component of another project entitled the Support to AIDS and Family Health (STAPH), it was later agreed that AIDSCAP should only implement a one year transitional project pending selection of a final STAPH contractor. This STAPH contract was awarded to John Snow Inc. (JSI) in 1994, and began operations in Malawi that same year as JSI-STAPH.⁴

The Ministry of Education and JSI-STAPH began HIV/AIDS education in schools by providing teacher orientation to the MoE AIDS curriculum. The head teacher and 4 other teachers from primary schools were invited to a one - day orientation on the new curriculum. However, as no mechanism was put in place for the transmission of information to others, there was not tricle down effect to other teachers. As a result, most teachers are still uncomfortable or unknowledgeable with the AIDS curriculum. Indeed, a final JSI-STAPH evaluation of AIDS teaching in the classroom explained that lack of teacher orientation directly correlated with why teachers were not teaching the AIDS curriculum.

B. *LIFE SKILLS Education in Schools*

Even with full impact, it has been recognized that the HIV/AIDS curriculum currently in primary schools has a limited focus on imparting information, rather than on changing attitudes and bringing about behavior change. Following, Life Skills Manuals began to be developed "ad hoc" throughout the country by various semi-urban based volunteers and NGOs. Peace Corps Volunteers and local counterparts in the northern Malawi district of Mzimba created one of the first successful manuals in 1996. Pursuant to the idea of developing a manual for educators, health and community workers, these booklets hoped to provide a behavior change approach concentrating on the development of communication, decision making, assertiveness, and empowerment skills of youth.

While the Peace Corps Life Skills Manual is interactive and somewhat effective, it is mainly used by US volunteers in a small portion of the country, and does not particularly delve into HIV/AIDS issues. More national in scope, having utilizing Central Education Management input in its development, is a recently introduced primary school Life Skills curriculum supported by UNICEF and the MoE. Recognizing the importance of universal teacher sensitization and training for the success of the project, the Ministry of Education is also working with the Swedish International Development Agency through UNFPA for a two year In-service Training for Primary School Teachers in Standard 5-8. This project will specifically work with the professional development of teachers on Life Skills and HIV/AIDS issues to enable them to reflect on their own attitudes, values and behaviors so as to be able to effectively teach the same principles to primary school pupils. Further, through this In-Service training, the MoE and its supporters will also encourage

³ *STAFH, Project No. 612-0238, Summary of Focus Group Discussions*; USAID Malawi, 1999

⁴ *Malawi AIDS Prevention Project, Final Report*; Family Health International, 1995

approaches that will assist in preparing primary school pupils in clarifying their attitudes and values in adolescent sexual and reproductive health, STDs/HIV/AIDS and gender, in order for them to adopt responsible behaviors.

C. *CENTRAL MINISTRY SUPPORT*

According to the JSI-STAPH national survey on AIDS education in the classroom, 42% of teachers surveyed said they did not teach the subject because they were not asked.⁵ Indeed, a major obstacle to HIV/AIDS education is the absence of this theme from the Ministry of Education in their Policy Investment Framework (PIF). Indeed, it must appear that the Ministry of Education actively supports and advocates mitigation efforts in their sector for any program to be effective. While there have been previous efforts at actually establishing an AIDS secretariat within the Ministry of Education, with little external support and absence of by-laws, these efforts were fruitless and the committee of three focal points eventually dissolved itself. Following a regional workshop on mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on education, efforts at establishing an HIV/AIDS in Education working group have been born with renewed vigor. Unlike previous efforts, there has been the appointment of only one focal point for HIV/AIDS, and the department of Planning within the Ministry of Education is currently drafting the by-laws.

⁵ *Evaluation of AIDS Education in the Classroom: A National Survey*, STAFH Project, 1997

II. NEW STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Education and USAID are currently engaged in systemic reform of the education system in Malawi. In support of this, USAID is interested in strengthening the education response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in this country through the support of multi-donor cooperation and multi-sectoral convergence within both the Malawi government and USAID.

The Ministry of Education and the Education Team at USAID/Malawi recognize the magnitude of HIV/AIDS, and its specific contribution to the increasing decline on the process and implementation of educational quality on a primary school system already struggling to sustain itself. Pursuant to these collective interests, the Ministry of Education and USAID have worked closely to identify ways of intervention, following a regional conference on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education with additional delegates from the Ministry of Finance, UNICEF and the Malawi Institute of Education. USAID has also recently commissioned financial support of a request by the MoE to fund a national research project on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education, and has further participated in several meetings and briefings with the Planning Division of the Ministry of Education to share information and identify key areas of intervention. Following these meetings, the Education Sector at USAID proposes two mitigation strategies aimed at providing Ministry support in responding to the effect HIV/AIDS has had on the supply and demand of education in Malawi.

The two activities USAID Education Sector proposes to implement are illustrated in the revised SO4 Framework as cross-cutting Activities Mitigating the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education (see next page). The two areas that will be targeted are Pre-Service Life Skills Training for teachers, and Central Ministry Support.

In previous years, national efforts at mitigating HIV/AIDS through education were found to have little to no impact when follow – up studies were done. This is evidenced in an evaluation of AIDS Education in the Classroom where 70% of students interviewed had not even seen AIDS education books, and an equal 70% of teachers admitted to not having attended any briefing on AIDS education.⁶

USAID Education Sector asserts that the best and most effective way to reach vulnerable youth between the ages of 5 and 14 is through the improvement of primary school Life Skills and HIV/AIDS education programs already in place. It is well known that while schooling is rarely universal, but its coverage is usually superior to that of most health systems, indicating a need for effective and informed transfer of information by teachers.

Another major obstacle to the success of HIV/AIDS education in the classroom was the perception that there was no specific communication or otherwise guidance from the Ministry of Education with regards to AIDS education and its inclusion in their time tables.

In concurrence with MoE goals with regards to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on Education through improving educational quality, the Education Sector at USAID hopes to provide support to two key activities that will assist in this effort. Cross-cutting Activity 1 is the support for Pre-Service Teacher Training, and cross cutting Activity 2 will be Central Ministry Support to establishing and maintaining an HIV/AIDS Taskforce. The long terms goals of these activities are to assist the MoE to build capacity for ongoing Management of the Education system in light of the current AIDS epidemic.

⁶ *Evaluation of AIDS Education in the Classroom: A National Survey*, STAFH Project, 1997

Include so4 Cross-Cutting Activity chart here.

Please see attached Framework.

ACTIVITY 1:
Pre-Service Teacher Training

The main strategy of the proposed project is to build the capacity of the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture to impart sexual and reproductive health messages to primary school pupils, particularly in areas which are generally considered as sensitive, specifically HIV/AIDS.

The project aims at adopting existing materials used in Malawi and in the region directly related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning and HIV/AIDS along with Life Skills. These materials can be converted into a teacher development manual for pre-service training of primary school teachers for the newly introduced Life Skills curriculum as supported by UNICEF.

The introduction of Life Skills Education in Malawi is a result of a series of meetings that started in November 1996. The involved organizations included UNICEF, Chancellor College, National AIDS Control Program, National Family Welfare Council, Malawi Institute of Education, Youth arm, UNFPA, UNESCO, Ministry of Education, CPAR, JSI STAFH Project, Ministry of Health, Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and Ministry of Youth Sports and Culture at that time.

After community level research and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF/Malawi piloted a National Life Skills curriculum in standard 4 in the 1999 school year. Taking the pilot responses and suggestions into consideration, the Life Skills curriculum will be expanded to grades 3 and 5 in the 2001 school year and further into all primary levels by 2005.

UNICEF is working in collaboration with SIDA through the UNFPA to incorporate In-service Teacher Training to this Life Skills curriculum. After preliminary discussions, UNICEF has shown keen interest in working with USAID and the MoE in implementing Pre-Service Training of the Life Skills curriculum to future Primary School Educators.

Mitigating HIV/AIDS through knowledge and support of overall Life Skills training is key, and will be effective when implementing Pre-Service training and sensitization throughout all 7 Teacher Training Colleges in Malawi. Training is to use Participatory Methodology and to include appropriate technology and can work within the existing Teacher Training College Development framework developed and supported by USAID.

This project should collaborate closely with other projects based at the MIE such as the GABLE project Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC) Unit, which is integrating gender in the curriculum; and the UNICEF funded Life Skills Project, which is providing HIV/AIDS information, communication, and assertiveness to youth. It is understood that the UNICEF supported Life Skills Project will In-Service teachers from Standards 1 – 4 itself, and that the UNFPA project will In-Service teachers with a focus on Standards 5-8. USAID Malawi and the Ministry of Education hope to reach teachers *before* they go into their posts with Pre-Service.

Year 1 – Full Training of Trainers Activity
Year 2 - Full Monitoring and Evaluation of Activity
Year 3 - Final Monitoring and Evaluation

ACTIVITY 2: Central Ministry Support

The Ministry of Education Sports and Culture Education component is composed of 5 departments, including Methods Advisory Services, Basic Education, Secondary and Higher Education, Planning, and Finance & Administration.

In relation to HIV/AIDS, the supply of education in Malawi is faced with depleting human resources due to death, increasing teacher absenteeism as a result of personal or family illnesses, and resulting reduced social demand for education.

As a point of entry for HIV/AIDS intervention, the MoE Planning Division is key since it coordinates and facilitates policy issues. The division has the potential to link different departments, units and sections in tackling HIV/AIDS within the education sector. It is also the most appropriate office for initializing and maintaining coordination and liaison with other Ministries, Non-governmental Organizations and other interested parties on HIV/AIDS in education.

The MoE has identified a Focal Point for HIV/AIDS mitigation in Education through the planning division, and is currently forming a Task Force. Invited members of this committee are to include a technical advisor as well as department heads from the Ministry of Education, National AIDS Control Program, the Ministry of Health and Population (Planning dept.), the Department of Human Resource and Development, the Ministry of Finance and the National Economic Council.

Following discussions and preliminary design meetings with the Department of Planning, USAID has been asked to provide central Ministry support to this Focal Point and the HIV/AIDS Task Force within the MoE. Through this assistance, USAID will help to facilitate the basic formation, implementation and monitoring of key policies as they relate to mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Education Sector. This support is intended to build the capacity of the MoE to manage itself in light of HIV/AIDS through technical assistance, training, material support, and support for future school based activities as determined in collaboration with the Task Force.

This activity will work in conjunction with the existing USAID supported Policy Reform Program in place at the MoE. Some possible activities for the MoE HIV/AIDS Task Force follows:

- The introduction of pre-schools or early development centers as a strategy for sustaining poor orphans. Adopted by some communities, village based early childhood development centers provide day care, hygiene, feeding and stimulation. This could be assisting elderly guardians and child headed households to cope with the burden of care.
- Addressing the rampant and chronic sexual abuse by teachers and its role in HIV/AIDS epidemic spread.
- Addressing the issues of students seeking primary school education, but who are unable to access the formal school system.
- Addressing a need for counseling services for students, orphans, and teachers in Primary School.
- Support through counseling for teachers living with HIV/AIDS, as well as those taking care of ill family members.
- Establishing a monitoring system to ensure effective implementation of AIDS education activities in system.
- Encouraging schools to utilize every opportunity to address students about HIV/AIDS. Health professional and AIDS experts could be systematically invited to address both students and teachers at schools.

III. ILLUSTRATIVE BUDGET

ACTIVITY 1: PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING

Year 1 – Full Training of Trainers Activity
Estimated cost: \$800,000

Year 2 – Full Monitoring and Evaluation of Activity
Estimated cost: \$400,000

Year 3 – Final Monitoring and Evaluation
Estimated cost: \$200,000

ACTIVITY 2: CENTRAL MINISTRY SUPPORT

Year 1 – Full Support to Central Ministry
Estimated Cost: \$200,000

Year 2 – Support to Central Ministry and Full Monitoring and Evaluating Activity
Estimated cost: \$100,000

Year 3 – Final Monitoring and Evaluation
Estimated cost: \$50,000