



**Joint Programme on Improving Access and Quality of Education for Girls in Malawi
FINAL PROGRAMME¹ NARRATIVE REPORT
REPORTING PERIOD: 1 JANUARY – 31 DECEMBER 2017**

<p>Programme Title & Project Number</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Title: Joint Programme on Improving Access and Quality of Education for Girls in Malawi • Programme Number (<i>if applicable</i>) • MPTF Office Project Number:³ 00091269 	<p>Country, Locality(s), Priority Area(s) / Strategic Results²</p> <p>Country/Region: Malawi Locality: Dedza, Mangochi, Salima</p> <p><i>Priority area/ strategic results:</i> Girls Education</p>
<p>Participating Organization(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFP • UNICEF • UNFPA 	<p>Implementing Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education, Science and Technology • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Youth and Sports • Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare • Ministry of Agriculture
<p>Programme/Project Cost (US\$)</p>	<p>Programme Duration</p>

¹ The term “programme” is used for programmes, joint programmes and projects.

² Strategic Results, as formulated in the Strategic UN Planning Framework (e.g. UNDAF) or project document;

³ The MPTF Office Project Reference Number is the same number as the one on the Notification message. It is also referred to as “Project ID” on the project’s factsheet page the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

Total approved budget as per project document:
\$19,139,925
MPTF /JP Contribution⁴:

- UNICEF- \$5,952,444
- WFP –\$9,197,342
- UNFPA - \$3,990,139

Other Contributions
(donors)
(if applicable)

TOTAL: \$19,139,925

Programme Assessment/Review/Mid-Term Eval.

- Yes No Date: Report – *if applicable please attach*
 Yes No Date: *dd.mm.yyyy*

Overall Duration: 30 months

Start Date⁵: 1 July 2014

Original End Date⁶: 31
October 2017

Current End date⁷: 31
December 2017

Report Submitted By

- Name: Mildred Mushinga
- Title: JPGE Coordinator
- Participating Organization (Lead): WFP
- Email address: mildred.mushinga@wfp.org

⁴ The MPTF or JP Contribution, refers to the amount transferred to the Participating UN Organizations, which is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁵ The start date is the date of the first transfer of the funds from the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. Transfer date is available on the [MPTF Office GATEWAY](#)

⁶ As per approval of the original project document by the relevant decision-making body/Steering Committee.

⁷ If there has been an extension, then the revised, approved end date should be reflected here. If there has been no extension approved, then the current end date is the same as the original end date. The end date is the same as the operational closure date which is when all activities for which a Participating Organization is responsible under an approved MPTF / JP have been completed. As per the MOU, agencies are to notify the MPTF Office when a programme completes its operational activities.

This page is intentionally left blank

Contents

1. LIST OF ACRONYMS	5
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
3. PURPOSE.....	7
4. RESULTS	8
5. QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT	20
6. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED.....	22

1. LIST OF ACRONYMS

CBCC - Community Based Child Care Centres

CBE- Complementary Basic Education

CSE- Comprehensive Sexuality Education

DEC- District Executive Committee

GBV- Gender Based Violence

GRR – Girls Resource Centers

IP - Implementing Partner

M&E- Monitoring and Evaluation

MoEST- Ministry of Education Science and Technology

MOLYSMD – Ministry of Labor, Youth, Sports and Manpower Development

MoH- Ministry of Health

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

MPTF – Multi-Partner Transfer Fund

MT – Metric Tons

MTR- Mid Term Review

NFE – Non-Formal Education

OVC – Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PSLCE – Primary School Leaving Certificate

PTA – Parent Teachers Association

SC- Steering Committee

SLHC – School Level Health Centre

SMC – School Management Committee

SRHR – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

THR- Take Home Rations

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

VEC- Village Education Committees

WFP – World Food Programme

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the inception of the Joint Programme, girls' attendance has increased yearly in supported schools. The comprehensive nature and multi-sectoral approach of the programme, which saw the integration of provision of school meals, capacity development of teachers, improved access to second chance education, protection from violence and improved access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, have been accredited as the main attributes behind the several positive results achieved during the programme.

Cumulatively, enrolment has grown by 31% since 2013/14 academic year increasing from 73,584 to 96,445 in 2016/17. The distribution of the enrolment as at December 2017 was 40,030 in Salima across 34 schools; 15,903 in Dedza in 14 schools; and, 40,512 in Mangochi in 31 schools. This represents a 34% increment in Salima, 20% in Dedza, and 33% in Mangochi. Of particular interest has been the overall girls' enrolment which has increased by about 36% from 36,289 in the 2013/14 academic year to 49,184 in the 2016/17 academic year.

The number of girls sitting for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) has also increased from the first year of the programme to date, with an overall growth by 23%: Salima registering 25%, Dedza 33% and 10% in Mangochi. Further research is needed to ascertain the seemingly slower progress in Mangochi.

Overall PSLCE pass rate has improved by 86% from 1,337 learners in 2014 to 2,489 in 2017. At district level, pass rates have improved across all targeted districts, with Salima improving by 54%, Dedza by 19% while Mangochi has performed admirably in this regard, with pass rates increasing by 196%. The number of girls passing has improved considerably from a total of 500 girls in 2014 to 1047 girls in 2017 representing a growth of 109% with Salima registering an 89% increase, Mangochi 139% whilst Dedza registered 29%.

Class attendance was a fundamental progress indicator in the JPGE, tracking the frequency at which learners report for classes in their respective schools. The programme used schools' class registers to track attendance and results showed that average attendance increased steadily from 64 % at baseline (2013/14) to 87 % in 2014/15 and by the end of the 2016/17 academic year, was at 93 %, surpassing the project target of 80 %. This reflects a 29 % increase from baseline of the average attendance rate for the three districts.

Finally, dropout rates have declined from a baseline of 7.4% to 5.5%, shrinking by 69% in Salima, 37% in Mangochi, and 41% in Dedza, over two academic years of the Joint Programme.

3. PURPOSE

The Joint Programme, Improving Access and Quality of Education for Girls in Malawi, was implemented in three districts over a period of three years (2014-2017). It aimed at improving access, quality and relevance of education for girls, through addressing key known threats to girls' education. The threats include poor food and nutrition, inadequate protection against sexual and physical violence, poor quality schooling, harmful social and traditional practices and violations of girls' sexual and reproductive rights. This was achieved through support from the technical expertise of the three agencies implementing various activities under seven primary and related outcomes as follows:

Outcome 1: Improve the nutrition of girls and boys, in targeted schools, allowing them to stay in school.

Outcome 2: Increase access to second chance education for girls who are in, or have left, school.

Outcome 3: Ensure quality integrated youth friendly services, resources and structures, addressing CSE, SRHR, HIV/AIDS and GBV for girls who are in, or have left, school.

Outcome 4: Reduce violence against girls in targeted schools and communities.

Outcome 5: Improve and enhance both teacher's attitudes and skills, effectively delivering life skills based and gender responsive methodologies

Outcome 6: Inform and empower adolescent girls to demand SRHR services, ensuring they participate and take leadership positions within their school and their community

Outcome 7: Empowered and committed communities will value quality education for all children, especially girls.

The programme employed a "whole school approach", focusing specifically on girls from standard 5 to 8. However, boys were also purposefully targeted through several activities including in school meals and provision of Take Home rations for orphaned and vulnerable boys, safe schools initiatives as well as access to SRH information and services. A total of 81 primary schools were targeted, in six zones, across the three districts of Salima, Mangochi and Dedza.

4. RESULTS

OUTCOME SPECIFIC RESULTS

In line with general pre-implementation guidelines, activities specific to each outcome of the programme were implemented, and are as follows:

Outcome 1: Improve the nutrition status of girls and boys, in targeted schools, allowing them to stay in school.

Outcome Context

Outcome 1 addressed the negative effects of food insecurity and hunger which constitute one of the most important shocks that disrupt school attendance and resultant dropouts. When food insecurity is present, households often resort to reducing the number of meals eaten in a day. The morning breakfast is usually the first meal that is skipped as a way of coping with household food shortages and yet it is the most important meal for children that are still growing. In Malawi, 70 percent of school-going children do not regularly eat breakfast before going to school. Inadequate food in the household is the cause in 76 percent of the cases⁸. Dropping out of school, poor classroom concentration and performance, frequent absenteeism from school and difficulties in learning are all challenges that hungry and malnourished children face. Food insecure households also tend to use children for labour to secure additional income to buy food which increases child abuse. Elderly girls including those in schools engage in transactional sex, often unprotected, resulting in sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies and early marriages.

The outcome used a Home-Grown School Meals (HGSM) approach as a critical social protection element that has the potential to reach the most vulnerable children and their households. There is tremendous evidence that the HGSM programme transfers resources implicitly or explicitly to poor households, offsetting some of the costs of sending the child to school and therefore supporting school participation. An additional income transfer to the households was through conditional take home rations (THR) to girls and orphan boys in upper grades of Std 5 – 8 to regularize attendance.

Results show that by December 2017, the programme was providing diversified nutritious meals to more than 97,974 students across the three districts. Funding for both Home Grown School Meals and Take Home Rations (THR) continued to be channeled to schools through the District Councils. By December 2017, the programme was reaching 100 % of eligible students with THR (both cash and food). SCOPE, a digital platform was piloted for THR beneficiary data management and tracking of entitlements to eligible learners. SCOPE entails digital attendance tracking to lessen burden on teachers and improve accuracy of conditionality data (which forms basis for distribution of THR). On the supply side, the programme has consistently procured diversified food commodities from farmer organizations, which contributed to the economic empowerment of the local communities. 13 Farmer Organizations were trained in access to marketing and post-

⁸ School Health and Nutrition Baseline Survey, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2006

harvest food handling skills. The farmer organizations supplied food to the schools through which 12,130 farmers (6,890 females and 5,240 males) directly benefited. The school feeding component of the programme has continued to boost community participation in school meals management with various community committees supporting the implementation of the programme by providing guidance as well as cooks in schools. To date, all Parents and Teachers Associations, School Management Committees, Procurement and Finance committees and Food Committees have been trained in hygiene, nutrition and sanitation whilst all 79 primary schools have been supported with certified three-in-one feeding shelters (storehouse, kitchen, feeding shelter) to enhance safe food storage, preparation and distribution.

As a drive towards sustainability, WFP started piloting a self-sustainable school meals project in 4 schools in Salima and Dedza (two per district). These schools fall within the catchment area where JPGE II will be scaling up. The approach is based on supporting communities in implementing a business model for production of own produce supported by small-scale irrigation scheme and linked with a strong agri-business component, that is managed by the communities and school committee and whose proceeds will be utilized to sell and feed children (purchase commodities for school meals or use some the produce to feed the children).

Additionally, each of the 79 schools⁹ was provided with fuel efficient stoves, cooking and eating utensils to promote hygiene practices, facilitate timely feeding and contribute towards environmental management.

Outcome 2: Increase access to second chance education for girls who are in, or have left, school.

Outcome Context

Outcome 2 addressed the challenge of out-of-school girls who are not attending school for various reasons including early pregnancies, marriages, and unfavorable socio-economic circumstances. JPGE's second chance education component, as championed by UNICEF through Ministry of Labour, Youth, Sports and Manpower Development and AGLIT+, is an accelerated learning model that helps out-of-school girls catch up in knowledge through an integrated package of academic and life skills. The component is based on providing functional literacy and numeracy skills through a nine-month Girl's Functional Literacy Programme (GFLP) delivered at the community level using a certified curriculum. The curriculum which was modified in the second year of implementation now includes aspects of sexual reproductive health including community specific functional literacy and numeracy training.

The second year of implementation begun in June 2016 and ended in February 2017. The programme's target for the year was to enroll 5,040 adolescent girls in 168 literacy centers in the five education zones across the three intervention districts. However, demand for the functional literacy classes was higher than anticipated and an additional 498 girls were registered above the targeted number. The programme has exceeded targeted enrolment by 10 percent and has a

⁹ The JPGE HGSM component supported 79 out of 81 target schools because the other 2 schools are already supported which school meals by other partners. Thus minimize duplication

completion rate of 70% compared to formal schooling completion/retention rate which stands at 47 % for girls and boys, respectively.

Out of the 5,538 adolescent girls who enrolled for the classes in June 2016, a total of 3,873 girls completed the nine-month course by February 2017 – representing an overall 69.8 percent completion rate. On the other hand, monthly attendance numbers have been fluctuating due to drop-outs associated with domestic and family labor commitments, age screening of all the under-aged and over-aged girls (Functional Literacy classes are supposed to be attended by girls who are above ten years old but not more than 24 years), and the lean season emergency response once-off food items provision which may have motivated enrolment.

Two types of assessments (continuous and final assessments) were administered to the learners in order to evaluate their aptitude. The learners were examined in three core subjects of Chichewa, English and Numeracy. Of the 3,873 students assessed, 585 learners from cohort II graduated into the formal schooling system.

Noting the challenge that adolescent mothers were facing in terms of balancing attending functional literacy classes and caring for their babies, the project linked the literacy centres to CBCCs to assist with child care during classes. A total of 29 CBCCs were aligned to Literacy Centers in all the three programme districts of Dedza, Mangochi and Salima. Seven additional CBCCs in Salima district, especially in Katelera Zone, were established by World Relief Organization close to literacy centers where children of AGLIT+ learners were getting support. AGLIT+ field staff in close collaboration with the District Social Welfare Offices ensured that children were getting the necessary support in the centers. The established centers were supported with various children's toys and other materials. However, more play-materials and supervision is still needed to support the centers.

COMPLEMENTARY BASIC EDUCATION (CBE)

Complimentary Basic Education is a three-year bridging that allows out of school adolescents to enroll back in formal schools at standard five or six. In September 2017, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology opened 480 learning centers with enrollment of 19, 200 learners; 9, 800 females and 9, 400 males.

Successes:

- More than 50% of CBE completers are re-admitted into formal primary education while others continue to live productive lives in their communities using the skills gained from the programme
- Increased literacy, numeracy and livelihoods levels to those who participated in the programme

2017/2018 Cohort

The 2017/2018 cohort commenced in September 2017 in 12 zones in Salima, Dedza and Mangochi. A total of 4,200 were planned to be recruited together with 168 literacy instructors, 15 Zonal and 3 district literacy coordinators. The 2017/2018 cohort commenced on 18th September 2017 with a total enrolment of 5, 617 against a planned 4, 200 adolescent girls in all the three districts. The current cohort that started in September 2017 will graduate in June 2018.

Outcomes 3 and 6.

Outcome 3: Ensure quality integrated youth friendly services, resources and structures, addressing CSE, SRHR, HIV/AIDS and GBV for girls who are in, or have left, school

Outcome 6: Inform and empower adolescent girls to demand SRHR services, ensuring they participate and take leadership positions within their school and their community

Outcome Context

The youth in Malawi face a myriad of barriers to access information and services relating to sexual reproductive health. The JPGE aims to address this by supporting adolescents' sexual and reproductive health through a package of Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS). The package provides access to comprehensive sexuality and reproductive education; services to prevent; diagnose and treat STIs; and counselling on family planning. These provisions educate young people on their sexual and reproductive health rights – including the right to delay marriage, the right to refuse unwanted sexual advances, and prevention of pregnancies.

In 2017, three additional youth friendly corners were established to facilitate access to integrated youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services among young people bringing the total number of youth corners to nine. In addition, youth mobilization campaigns were conducted to raise awareness as well as encourage young people especially sexually active in-school adolescents to patronize the youth corners. A total of 12 outreach clinics on integrated youth friendly health services were also conducted in hard to reach communities surrounding the targeted schools to provide SRH information and services. Resultantly, 9,500 adolescents accessed integrated sexual and reproductive health services through static facilities and outreach clinics. Current YFHS delivery reporting forms do not capture disaggregated data in terms of in-school or out-of-school, however, deliberate efforts are being undertaken by the programme to track the number of in-school adolescents that access YFHS.

Life skills comprehensive sexuality education sessions for in and out of school adolescents were conducted reaching out to 9,961 young people. The sessions have proved to be effective in empowering adolescents to start making informed decisions and choices on sexual and reproductive health issues. Though not conclusive, only 12 cases of pregnancies were recorded in the targeted schools in 2017 as compared to 24 cases recorded in 2016. Through a series of girls' leadership and empowerment trainings that have been conducted, all girls (100%) from standard 5 to 8 participated in school clubs though only 45% were holding leadership position in those clubs.

Dialogue sessions with communities, school authorities and other key stakeholders were also conducted where recommendations for addressing sexual and reproductive health rights, girls' education, child marriages and teen pregnancies were made. By the end of 2017, 46% of the recommendations were implemented which resulted into 23 girls withdrawn from child marriages and six girls that dropped out of school due to pregnancies being re-admitted.

Outcome 4: Reduce violence against girls in targeted schools and communities.

Young adolescents in Malawi experience violence in all settings, including their homes, schools, communities and institutions. It is estimated that 20% of all girls in Malawi experience sexual violence and 67% of boys and 40% of girls suffer physical abuse¹⁰. Violence perpetrated in schools – by teachers and peers – is a major contributor to these figures.

Based on lessons learnt and recommendations by stakeholders gathered during the implementation phase, key strategic interventions complemented the implementation of the programme. The Judiciary introduced “mobile courts” that brought courts closer to people and expedited prosecution thereby enabling access to justice by the most vulnerable. The first national level joint monitoring was conducted involving stakeholders from the key ministries of Education and Gender, the Malawi Police Service, and UNICEF’s implementing partner INGO ActionAid. District and community level coordination meetings were held during the reporting period. Awareness of child related laws was increased and schools performing well received awards – both new areas of intervention.

During the life of the program, 12,658 children (Standards 5 to 8) were enrolled into preventative empowerment programs, surpassing the 11,060 target. Among these, 166 girls who experienced sexual abuse voluntarily enrolled in Sexual Assault Survivors Anonymous (SASA), a 12-week healing programme offered to girls who disclose sexual abuse. An evaluation of the empowerment program under JPGE, conducted by the John Hopkins University found a 39.5% decrease in the number of girls (Standards 5 to 8) experiencing sexual violence or abuse. A similar randomized control trial of schools not part of the programme found a slight increase in the incidence of rape, justifying the importance of empowering girls with strategies to reduce the risk of sexual violence. Scaling up this evidence-based intervention to reach more girls is a priority for phase II.

All 81 JPGE supported schools now have functional learners’ councils that are providing leadership experience to 810 learners with a 50:50 gender disaggregation. School improvement plans, with students’ inputs led by the student councils, have been implemented in almost all schools in the programme. Training of teachers on “positive discipline” as an alternative to corporal punishment has reduced corporal punishment by half. Joint efforts by teachers, learners and community members led to the development of participatory codes of conduct in 96% of the schools.

To strengthen referral pathways and police presence in schools, the One School One Police Officer (OSOPO) initiative has been established in schools to deter and encourage reporting of abuse. Through child friendly reporting mechanisms such as reporting boxes, a total of 1,319 cases (Salima 457; Dedza 274; and Mangochi, 588) were reported.

Bicycles were provided to police officers to collect cases and accelerate implementation of the OSOPO initiative. Criminal cases were filed in courts and heard by the Judiciary through the mobile courts. Among the cases reported to police, 51 cases related to sexual abuse were prosecuted while the rest were referred to appropriate duty bearers/service providers for redress and/or action. Community based child protection structures were linked with schools and the Judiciary, the Police and social welfare officers held various awareness campaigns on relevant child related laws. It is envisaged that increased knowledge will guide communities to take desired

¹⁰ Violence against children and young women in Malawi, 2013, p26

action and make appropriate decisions on children related issues. Awards were also introduced to reinforce the adopted safe schools' normative practices. About 70% of the award funds were channeled to activities directly benefiting children such as the procurement of school uniform and educational materials.

Outcome 5: Improve and enhance both teacher's attitudes and skills, effectively delivering life skills based and gender responsive methodologies

Outcome Context

Outcome 5 focuses on improving teachers' attitudes and skills to effectively deliver life skills based and gender responsive methodologies, activities that work towards improving the quality of education

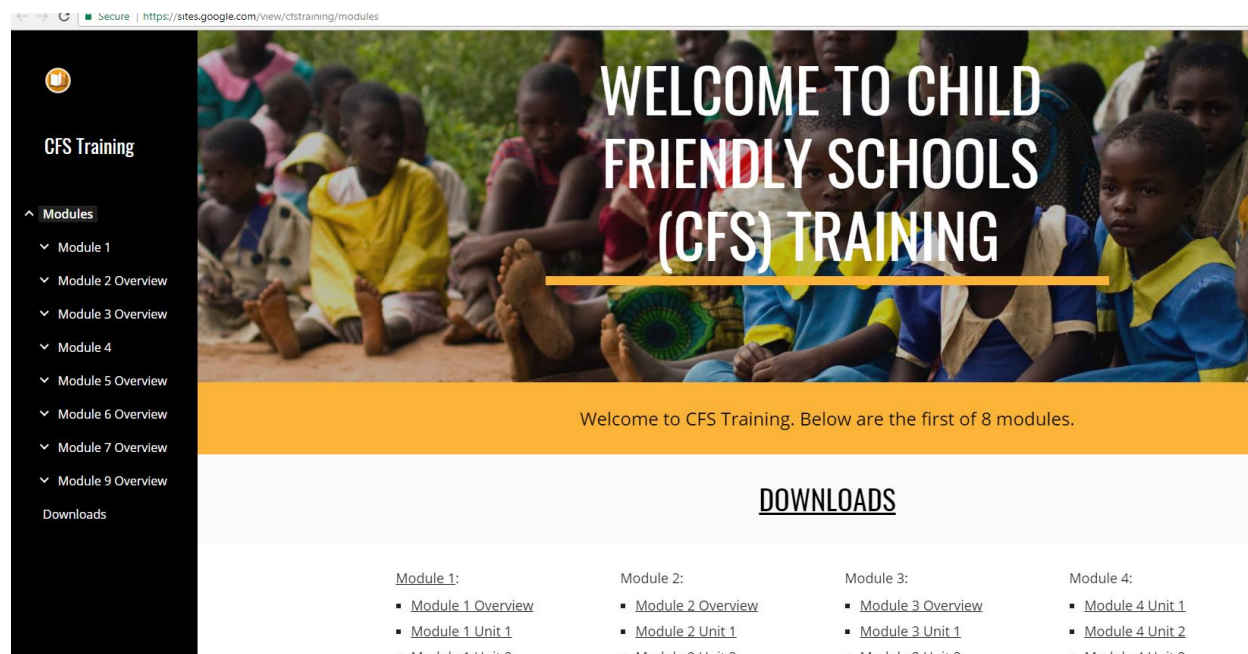
Machinga Teacher Training Centre conducted Teacher Resource Centre (TRC) sensitization meetings for 392 members of School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) and mother groups (MGs) in 28 primary schools across the three implementation districts. Resultantly, teachers established 23 Teacher Resource Centers with active participation of the community members in the development of teaching and learning materials using locally available materials. The TALULAR materials are utilized by teachers during classes to concretize abstract concepts to learners. Some of the materials in the TRCs are developed by students during their Expressive Arts lessons. This improves the artistic and life skills. An implementing partner, Voluntary Services Organisation (VSO) also trained district level education managers on the establishment, operationalization and sustainability of the TRCs.

Education specialists (VSO volunteers) conducted Digital Education Training (DET) for 68 teachers in five schools in Mangochi district (Mdinde, Lusalumwe, Malindi II, Nandembo, and Lufalu). The purpose of the training was to build the capacity of teachers to lead a one class session. There are 1359 learners who have been registered in the five learning centers, who access the tablets on daily basis for the mathematics, and Chichewa sessions. The course provides a comprehensive literacy program with reading materials that have four strands- Phonemic awareness; from letters to words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and stories. VSO has constructed 19 learning centers for digital learning and as Girls Resource Rooms (GRR) have been in primary school within the target district, (5 in Dedza, 5 in Mangochi and 11 in Salima) and 5 in Mangochi have been adapted as learning centres.

VSO procured 660 Ipads loaded with OneBillion software of Masamu and Chichewa which will be used in the 22 learning centers. The Applications are geared to support foundational phase literacy (standard one and two). Each learner, by working on the Masamu app through a virtual teacher, now gets the individual attention and immediate feedback they deserve. In order to strengthen the foundational literacy skills for the learners, VSO has uploaded e-books on the tablets to allow older children who may not need foundational literacy to read for fun. Digitalized story books engages the readers more than the traditional books. In preparation for the Girls Resource Rooms (GRR) operationalization, VSO has developed GRR materials which include video clips, posters and documentaries of girls within the localities of the school that serve as inspiration for

the girls in the schools. Once the GRR is operational girls will use these materials uploaded on the tablet for focused group discussion on issues common to them that affect their education and how others overcame them. Partners working in the area can upload information materials for the girls that they can use.

VSO in partnership with Lamar University, has digitalized the Child friendly school training manuals, which will later be uploaded/ accessed using the tablet in the 22 learning centers. This will be used for teachers’ subsequent trainings using virtual teachers. This will be integrated in the CPD implementation at the school level. The modules have been finalized and awaiting validation and approval by the Ministry of Education as training materials for the teachers via digital technology.



In addition, 806 teachers, from a target of 670, were trained in life skills and gender responsive methodologies. As a result 75 schools have made provision for change rooms to support menstrual hygiene management, a major cause for girls’ absenteeism in schools. 22 teachers across the 3 districts also conducted remedial classes for re-admitted girls. 67% of Parents and Teachers Associations and 56% of School Management Committees out of a target of 90% have also been trained in ensuring that schools are gender responsive.

Teachers, SMCs (600 members), PTAs (600 people) and mother groups (450 people) across the 3 districts were trained on the implementation of the re-admission policy and it was noted that the number of girls’ dropouts reduced while the number of re-admitted girls has gradually increased over the years.

Below are examples from the districts on the number of re-admitted students across the districts.

Mangochi district re- admissions

Academic year	Mdinde Zone			Mkumba Zone		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2013/14	151	146	297	241	329	570
2014/15	286	343	629	342	434	776
2015/16	298	334	632	419	499	918
2016/17	236	251	486	428	391	819
Totals, 2014-2017	820	928	1,747	1,189	1,324	2,513

Salima district dropouts and re-admissions

Academic Year	Pregnancy - Related Drop-outs	Re-admissions
2013/14	412	26
2014/15	218	217
2015/16	179	281
2016/17	63	296
Totals	872	820

Dedza district dropout and re-admissions¹¹

Academic Year	Related Drop-outs	Re-admissions
2014/15	51	5
2015/16	29	45
2016/17	5	71
Totals	872	820

3.1.5 Outcome 7: Empowered and committed communities will value quality education for all children, especially girls.

Outcome context

Given the key known threats to girls' education, it is apparent that there are also a number of structural and cultural barriers that restrict their access to and the quality of education they receive. In recognition of the foregoing challenges, outcome 7 promotes interventions that partner with

¹¹ Data for Dedza was as of February 2017

communities to eliminate the pervasive inequitable norms and practices that perpetuate gender-based violence (GBV), inhibit girls from completing their education, and contribute to broader social instability and economic stagnation.

This outcome has several community empowerment activities spearheaded by all UN agencies which engage whole communities, including adolescent girls, parents, and adolescent boys. The interventions also draw the participation of traditional and religious leaders, gate-keepers, civil society organizations (CSOs), Support Mother’s Groups (SMGs), and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Through the programme, teachers and school management staff have an important role in providing positive role models for both boys and girls, identifying girls at risk, and encouraging married girls to return to schools through the Support Mother Groups. The interventions are deliberately designed to raise broad awareness about the benefits of keeping girls in schools - for the girls and the community at large. The activities also engage participants in discussions about shifting gender norms and practices, ending early marriage practices and other harmful social practices

The Communication for Development (C4D) tool was used to implement activities on Outcome 7. C4D is about seeking change at different levels and utilizes different strategies targeting the individual, family and the community level. The interventions were conducted in strong collaboration with the district information offices, community radios, community leaders and NGOs in the districts.

Community awareness

Community awareness strategies using radio, film shows, community meetings and theatre for development were used to sensitize communities on the importance of girls’ education. In the 3 districts an estimated total of 15,178 people were reached.

4 Radio jingles have been produced and were aired on Bembeke FM in Dedza, Umoyo radio in Mangochi district and Timveni Radio on the importance of girls’ education. Over 45% of the people in the target areas (Dedza, Mangochi and Salima) have been reached with the messages.

Community based dialogue

This strategy promoted the review of existing bi-laws as well as the creation of district based dialogue.

	Girls Targeted	Reach
Girls	10,250	9345 (9900 Salima & 350 Dedza)
Chiefs	82	82 (16 Dedza & 66 Salima)
Head teachers	48	34, 14 (Salima, Dedza)
Mother groups	48	34, 14 (Salima, Dedza)

Area Development Committee members	48	34, 14 (Salima, Dedza)
SBCs (PTAs, SMCs)	48	34, 14 (Salima, Dedza)
Anankungwi, Angaliba, Akunjira	565	495, 70 (Salima, Dedza)

As a result, chiefs in Dedza have formed the chief’s council on girls’ education and 82 chiefs in all districts, 5 Traditional Authorities in Salima and 8 TAs in Dedza have reviewed and are implementing bi-laws that are favorable to girls education. Other practices which were also affecting learning have been stopped e.g. Video show rooms have been persuaded to open after school hours and traditional Gule wa Mkulu performances are also to take place after school hours.

In addition, in partnership with UN Women¹² the HeforShe project was implemented which aimed at addressing challenges that keep girls out of school perpetuated by unfavorable norms and harmful cultural practices. UN Women met with 36 Traditional Authorities (TAs)(12Females, 24Males) and 21 members of JPGE Technical Working Group (TWG) in Salima, Dedza and Mangochi districts. The workshops aimed at bringing together chiefs and district council members working on education to share community led best practices in the promotion of girl’s education. One of the key innovative strategies shared by TA Kachindamoto was on the role of fathers termed as “secret fathers” in promoting girl’s education in Dedza district.

¹² UNICEF used funding from other sources to partner with UN Women



Chiefs meetings on gender responsive bylaws that promote girl's education- Dedza and Mangochi Chiefs: Courtesy of Limbani Msiska- UN Women, 2017

A key outcome of the meetings was that action plans were developed and participants agreed to implement several strategies to contribute towards achieving the project specific outcomes of improving the retention of girls in primary school and to address challenges that keep girls out of school.

In addition, UN Women in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, held an awareness raising activity utilizing sports (Football and Netball) at Chimbiya TDC ground, T/A Kaphuka, Dedza. The awareness raising activity targeted seven schools from two clusters within the Chimbiya education zone, as well as their surrounding community members. This activity aimed at bringing together district prominent soccer players, netball players and male champions to exhibit their skills and then expertly weave awareness raising messages on the role of men and boys in promoting girls access to education, gender equality and women's empowerment through male involvement. Additionally, T/A Kaphuka, the District Sports Officer and JPGE coordinator for Dedza district, used the platform to share community led initiatives being undertaken by the district to promote girls access to education in the targeted education zone, communities and their surrounding areas.

Some of the key outcomes from this event include:

1. 1,300 people were reached including parents, girls, boys, community members, teachers and school governing bodies with raising awareness messages on gender sensitization and child rights with the aim of promoting girls and boys access to education
2. The initiative engaged 85 men and boys as HeForShe champions through the signing of the HeForShe pledge, committing to become male champions in the community to promote girls access to education, gender equality and women empowerment.



Group photo – The Chimbiya primary school football team with their branded JPGE HeForShe trophy and medals. - Dedza, 2017: Courtesy of Lusungu Jonazi- UN Women, 2017

Another innovative engagement was UNICEF's partnership with Standard Bank. Through this partnership, Standard Bank mentored 100 girls from school around Chimbiya Zone. A mid-year review of the initiative indicated that the mentorship had achieved the desired result among girls as now they were more motivated to remain in school and they aspire to be like the mentors they have engaged with. Apart from the sessions, Standard Bank also provided exposure to girls by giving them educational visits to Lilongwe.



A girl from a UN JPGE school in Dedza asking a question to Zonke during a breakfast meeting organized by Standard Bank

5. QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Technical and District Review Workshops: Annual review and planning meetings were successfully held to develop comprehensive district work plans with both District and Implementing Partners (IP). During the reviews, some key suggestions and resolutions were proffered and these included suggestions to revise some menus and vary school meals to prevent school attendance from being influenced by food to be taken for the day, introduction of incentives such as transport for caregivers in the Community Based Child Care Centers (CBCCs), opening of separate UN funds account instead of District Pool Account – District Development Fund (DDF) for District Councils and ways of improving accountability and liquidation procedures.

Steering Committee Meetings and Annual Review Meetings: These were successfully held annually to discuss and make key resolutions for programme related activities. Review meetings were used to endorse the Annual Reports and recommend disbursement of the subsequent year funds.

Technical Working Group meetings

The Coordinator convened monthly Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings where agency focal persons updated on project activity progress planned for joint activities and received updates on related coordination activities.

The government TWG was convened for the first time in 2017 and managed to conduct a familiarization visit to all the three implementation districts. This was a remarkable achievement towards involvement of the various ministries in the programme at national level. The familiarization visit allowed the TWG members from the ministries headquarters some firsthand experience of the programme activities as well as an appreciation of the JPGE model.

Partnerships

Coordination of Implementing Partners was greatly improved through the formation of District Coordinating Committees which met monthly to share on various programme activities and engaged in joint monitoring activities which helped to reduce duplication of efforts and unnecessarily overwhelming beneficiaries with activities especially in schools. A new partnership was developed with Standard Bank whereby female Standard Bank employees act as mentors to girls within the JPGE schools.

Chief Secretary's visit

The programme successfully hosted a high-level familiarization visit for the Chief Secretary at a school in Salima, showcasing JPGE as a premier model of integrating efforts towards improving access to and quality of girls' education in Malawi. The visit also aimed at promoting advocacy for improvement of government coordination and ownership of the programme as well as increasing the visibility of the JPGE model.

National Girls Education Conference

The JPGE successfully convened a National Girls Education Conference in Lilongwe in June 2017 under the theme "Working Together towards Promoting Opportunities for Girls through Quality Education". The conference theme was crafted within a context of girls' education remaining a great challenge in the education and social sectors notwithstanding the significant investments in the sector by key bilateral partners in partnership with the government and others. The conference's objectives were:

1. To create a platform to lobby government for a stronger national mechanism to accelerate and sustain efforts on girls' education;
2. Share practices from the JPGE and development partners' Girls Education programmes;
3. Provide an opportunity for diverse actors within and outside government to share key innovative ideas on Girls Education;
4. Collaboratively design a practical-government led effective collaboration on Girls Education with participation of development partners, the UN and NGOs.

The conference was well attended by various players and donors including key implementing civil society organizations, government ministries, international development partners, academic institutions, and the UN family as well as media houses. Key recommendations on strengthening government coordination were made and to be adopted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology as the coordinating ministry.

Inter-ministerial committee on adolescents and youth

Through JPGE, UNFPA in collaboration with other stakeholders supported two meetings of the Inter-ministerial committee on adolescents and youth which were held in January and July 2017. One of key outcome of these meetings was the formation of the sub-technical working groups on adolescents, girls and young women which is mandated to provide technical support on girls' programmes including promotion of girls' education.

Phase II Project Document Development

In June 2017, the Technical Working Group undertook to develop the project document for phase II which was accepted for funding by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in October 2017. In December 2017, the programme successfully held a combined Phase 1 Review meeting and

Orientation to Phase II workshop in which government officials from district and national levels participated and came up with recommendations for strengthening government leadership and ownership of the programme.

6. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Government's directive to provide learners with meals before classes start at 7:30am has helped to improve punctuality for both learners and teachers and has ensured that learning is not interrupted. This is to align the school feeding with the national reading programme (NRP). However, observance of feeding times in some schools is still problematic due to non-adherence to the standard menus that can easily be prepared within a short time. Sensitization meetings with key stakeholders have been conducted and menus revised to ensure compliance.
- Most of the teen mothers and their babies attending Functional Literacy classes are generally malnourished. In the next phase, there is need to consider including continuous provision of food to learners and their children. This would help them concentrate in class as well as focus on completing classes instead of spending more time looking for food for their families.
- Long distances to Youth Friendly Health Services centers continued to be a stumbling block to SRHR needs of young girls and boys in the targeted schools. Though all schools have been linked to YFHS facilities, most girls and boys in the targeted schools do not access services in such facilities due to long distances.
- Pregnancy cases amongst young girls continued to be a challenge in some of the targeted communities especially in Salima due to deep rooted cultural practices that tolerate child marriages. Some traditions like Chitomero are still strong and this is affecting girls' education. There is need to continue engaging communities and other opinion leaders to act on eradication of such harmful cultural practices.
- Communities and parents have limited understanding of the concept and purpose of youth friendly health services centers hence continuing to discourage their children to patronize the facilities.
- Negative stereotypes associated with accessing SRHR services still deter some youths from accessing the services.
- Results based reporting: Implementing partners have faced challenges in results based reporting hence there is data which is yet to be verified to track progress on some indicators. However, it is expected that the final evaluation will be able to provide data on some of the indicators.
- With the improved enrolment and retention rates, most schools have inadequate number of teacher to serve the growing number of children in schools. For the results to be sustained, schools need to have adequate qualified teachers.
- The need to continue encouraging younger adolescent girls graduating from the functional literacy classes to join formal primary school while the older ones should be supported by linking them to community technical colleges for skills development.
- There is need extend the linkages between literacy centers and CBCCs to areas which are not yet reached.
- Strengthening of Life Skills and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) components of AGLIT+ curriculum to help learners acquire in-depth knowledge of SRH issues.