

Ex-post evaluation

Basic Education Support programme I & II, Malawi



Title	Basic Education Support programme I & II				
Sector and CRS Key	Primary education 11220				
BMZ number	2014 68 156 (Phase I), 2015 67 296 (Phase II)				
Client	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)				
Recipient and executing agency	Ministry of Finance / Ministry of Education, Malawi				
FC financing volume and instrument	Phase I: EUR 15 million / budgetary funds / grant Phase II: EUR 9.75 million / budgetary funds / grant				
Project duration	2015-2023	Reporting year	2025	Year of random sample	2025

Project objectives and implementation

The objective at the outcome level was to improve the quality of practical teacher training in primary education at selected *Teaching Practice Schools* (TPSs) by improving the framework conditions, particularly for student teachers. At the overarching development policy level, the objective was to improve the quality of primary education in Malawi. To this end, 60 TPSs were expanded, rehabilitated and furnished according to need. Furthermore, the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities of the three *teacher training colleges* (TTCs) associated with the schools were rehabilitated.

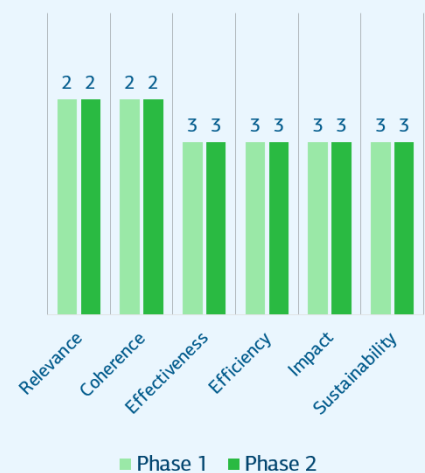
Key results

The project/programme had a positive development impact, but is appraised as "partially successful" for the following reasons:

- Improving the quality of primary education remains of great relevance and is one of the declared goals of the Malawian government.
- The improvement of school infrastructure addressed an important bottleneck in the education system.
- The use of steel beams in all buildings posed a challenge for the local market, as most of these elements had to be imported and were also cost-intensive.
- The Malawian government recently reduced the number of students admitted to teacher training programmes, with the result that, at the time of the evaluation, training capacities at TPSs and TTCs were not being fully utilised. However, the majority of the measures do not solely benefit teacher training students; schoolchildren also benefit equally from the significant improvement in infrastructure during the school year. The classrooms, sanitary facilities, teachers' houses and administrative buildings are used intensively.
- Due to the government's tight budget, there are delays in recruiting trained teachers, which dampens the impact of the project/programme.
- The necessary preventive maintenance and repair measures are critical in terms of sustainability. This is due to limited budgets and a lack of awareness.

Overall rating

moderately successful



1: very successful – 6: highly unsuccessful

Conclusions

- Well-trained female teachers serve as role models for girls. Safe accommodation can help to attract female teachers to schools and encourage female student teachers to pursue their studies.
- Steel structures in buildings are durable and also low-maintenance. However, when infrastructure requirements are high, it may be necessary to weigh up cost considerations and durability when selecting a design.
- For defects to be reported and warranty claims to be made, knowledge of warranty processes should be systematically and sustainably embedded among those responsible

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Abbreviations

PCR	Project completion report
GDP	Gross domestic product
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEM	District Education Manager
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan
ESJF	Education Sector Joint Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
DC	Development cooperation
FC	Financial cooperation
FC E	FC Evaluation
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
HDI	Human Development Index
IDA	International Development Association
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
JDI	Joint Declaration of Intent
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MERP	Malawi Education Reform Programme
MESIP	Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoE	Ministry of Education
NESIP	National Education Sector Investment Plan
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NSTE	National Standards for Teacher Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
PA	Programme assessment
PP	Programme proposal
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SMC	School Management Committee
TES	Transforming Education Summit
TPS	Teaching Practice School
TTC	Teacher Training College
TC	Technical Cooperation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	US dollar
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

Overview

General conditions and classification of the project

In 1994, Malawi introduced free, universal primary education. As a result, the number of primary school pupils rose sharply: from 1.7 million in 1994 to 4.2 million in 2015 (see Figure 1). Due to strong population growth, the number of primary school pupils is set to continue rising, reaching 5.4 million in 2024, without the number of classrooms, trained teachers and necessary learning and teaching materials being adjusted to meet the growing demand.

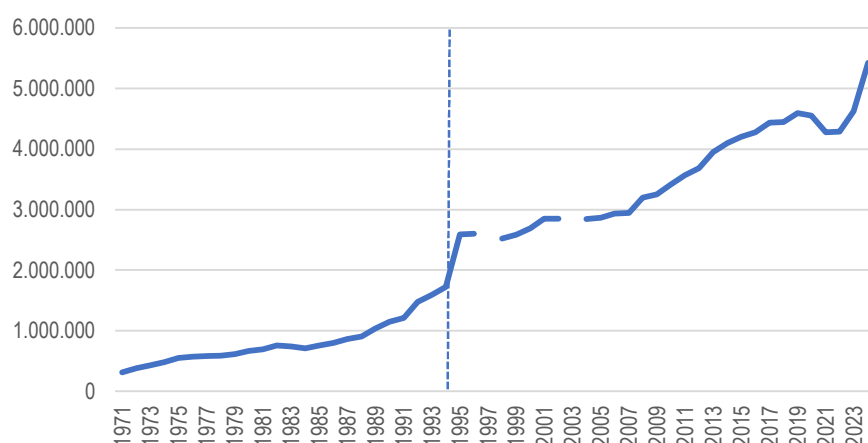


Figure 1 : Number of pupils in primary education (public and private schools)

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, EMIS; own illustration.

Accordingly, Malawian pupils rank at the bottom of the countries in this region in terms of learning success. A study commissioned by USAID, *Early Grade Reading Assessment* (2014), shows that 90% of pupils in the 3rd grade cannot read fluently. According to data from the *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (MICS, 2021), conducted between 2019 and 2020 by the National Statistics Office as part of the global MICS programme, only 18.9% of children (aged 7-14) have basic reading and writing skills and only 12.6% have basic numeracy skills. In the last school year (2023/24), 27% of boys and 26% of girls had to repeat a year of primary school, and less than half (45%) of all boys and girls (boys: 43%, girls: 46%) completed primary school by the end of 8th grade.

Although the average pupil/classroom ratio¹ fell from 126:1 in 2015 to 105:1 in 2024, this is still well above the government's target of 80:1, which is to be achieved by 2030. There is also considerable variation between individual districts (e.g. 51:1 in Likoma and 145:1 in Machinga in 2024) and between urban and rural areas, where class sizes of up to 200 pupils are not uncommon. With regard to the pupil/teacher ratio, the national plan envisages a ratio of 60:1. While this was still 75:1 in 2015, it fell to 65:1 in 2024 – but with a highly unequal distribution between urban (40:1) and remote areas (80:1). In order to achieve the national target, it will therefore be necessary to continue recruiting qualified teachers.

Teachers in Malawi receive their theoretical training at both state and private *teacher training colleges* (TTCs). In order to meet the massive demand for teachers, the Malawian government introduced the *Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme* (MIITEP) in 1997, which was supported by many donors, with the aim of training as many teachers as possible in the shortest possible time. As part of this programme, the existing curricula at all colleges were suspended to make way for the new training model, which combined distance learning and classroom teaching. After MIITEP expired in 2005, the *Initial Primary Teacher Education* (IPTE) model was introduced in the same year, which originally comprised two phases totalling six semesters: one year of theoretical training at a TTC (three semesters) and one year of practical training at a specially selected TPS near the TTC (three semesters). Due to the continuing shortage of teachers, the *Open and Distance Learning* (ODL) programme was introduced in 2010 as a cost-effective way of increasing the number of teachers. Recruits underwent a short three-week training course in distance learning before spending two and a half years working in schools. In 2015, the government announced that it would suspend the ODL programme and at the same time significantly expand the IPTE programme at the TTCs.² The number of TTCs increased from 14 in 2015, of which 8 were state-run and 6 were private, to 20 in 2024, of which 11 are state-run and 9 are privately run.

¹ The ratio refers to permanent classrooms.

² WB (2017): *Moving Teachers to Malawi's Remote Communities. A Data-Driven Approach to Teacher Deployment*.

The IPTE curriculum was completely revised in 2017. The overloaded, highly theoretical and exam-oriented training was considered critical, as it did not adequately prepare teacher training students for practical work. The revised curriculum now follows a "2 IN- 2 OUT - 2 IN" training structure, i.e. within the two-year programme, subject content with a special focus on teaching methods is now taught at the TTCs in the first two semesters. After that, i.e. in the third semester of the first year and the first semester of the second year, teacher training candidates receive practical training at primary schools. During the last two semesters, students return to the TTCs, where the focus is on reflecting on their experiences in teaching practice and further practising methods, content and various educational policy measures.

In addition to content-related aspects of teacher training, the framework conditions for teacher training students at the TPSs were in need of significant improvement at the time of the programme assessment (PA) in 2015. Due to a shortage of classrooms, these were overcrowded or a considerable proportion (around one third) of lessons took place outdoors, which led to lessons being cancelled depending on the weather conditions. In addition, the lack of sufficient safe accommodation for teacher training students at the TPSs, as well as sanitary facilities and water, had a negative impact on the learning and teaching environment.

Brief description

The structural expansion, rehabilitation and needs-based furnishing of 60 TPSs – which were linked via partnership agreements with three Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) in Lilongwe, Dedza and Blantyre – was intended to improve the quality of practical teacher training by improving the conditions for teacher training students. Other beneficiaries were pupils in grades 1-8 and teachers at the TPSs, who benefited equally from the majority of the infrastructure measures during the school year (all year round). Depending on the condition of the existing facilities, the need and the urgency, the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities of the three TTCs were also renovated. The project/programme comprised two phases: Phase I (BMZ No.: 2014 68 156) started in 2015 – further funds for Phase II were committed in 2016 (BMZ No.: 2015 67 296).

Breakdown of total costs

The total cost of the project/programme is EUR 28.20 million. As both phases involved the same components and beneficiaries, the costs were divided proportionally.

	Phase 1 & 2 (plan)	Phase 1 & 2 (actual)
Investment costs (total) in EUR million	27.10	28.20
Own contribution in EUR million	2.10	3.45*
External funding in EUR million	25**	24.75
Phase I	15	15
Phase II	10	9.75
of which BMZ funds in EUR million	25	24.75

Table 1 : Breakdown of costs.

Note: *The Republic of Malawi's own contribution consisted largely of covering the 16.5% value added tax on the costs of construction and furnishings as well as the operating and personnel costs of the participating TPSs and TTCs and therefore cannot be quantified precisely. **The actual total budget was EUR 25,018,592.00, as remaining funds from the 'Basket Funding for Basic Education' project (2005 66 513) amounting to EUR 18,592.00 were transferred to the project/programme (2014 68 156) in 2018.

Map of the project region

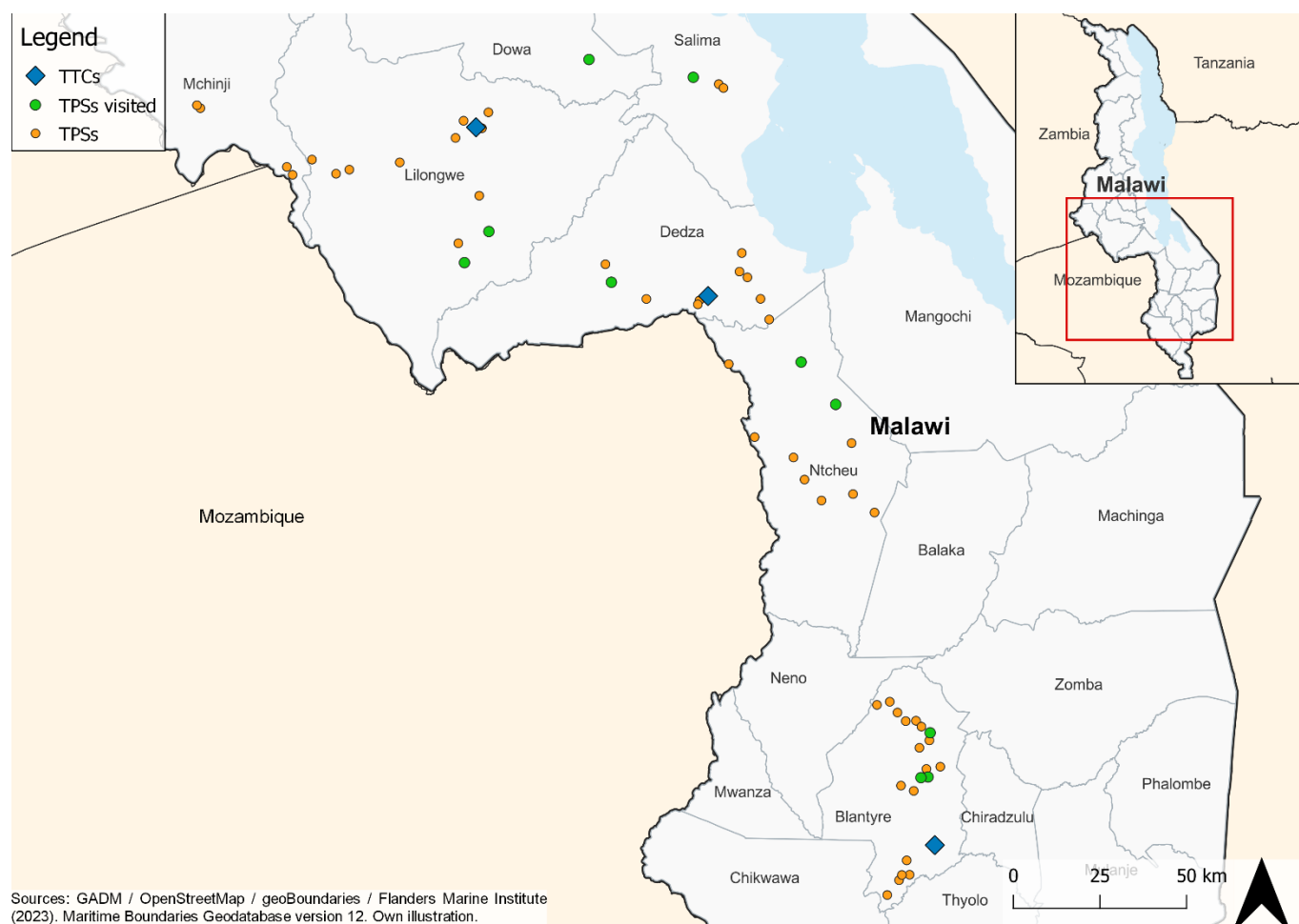


Figure 2 : Map of the country including programme locations.
Source: Own illustration.

Strengths and weaknesses of the programme

The strengths include in particular:

- The high level of ownership observed in many places at the TPSs/TTCs has a significant impact on the success of the project/programme.
- The holistic approach that was chosen with a view to improving learning and teaching conditions. For example, the improvement of infrastructure includes not only the construction of safe accommodation for teacher training students, but also urgently needed houses for teachers at the schools. Pupils also benefited equally from the construction of new classrooms and sanitary facilities, where there was also a massive need.
- The school infrastructure that has been funded is designed to be relatively low-maintenance. This is particularly advantageous in a resource-constrained environment.

The weaknesses include in particular:

- Implementation was delayed due to pandemic-related construction delays and the limited management capacity of the implementing agency.
- The use of steel beams in all buildings posed a challenge for the local market, as most of these elements had to be imported.
- The use of steel beams was very cost-intensive, but in return they are very durable and require less maintenance.
- Preventive maintenance and corrective maintenance, as well as appropriate user care, are a fundamental problem with regard to the sustainability of the effects.
- The water supply at Blantyre TTC remains inadequate, partly because the local contractor failed to remedy the defects and partly because, after the guarantee was invoked, the funds were repaid to KfW but no further coordination took place to use the funds to repair the damage.
- Defects in the solar systems of many TPSs were not repaired despite existing guarantees.
- The low absorption rate of IPTE graduates into the teaching profession due to budget restrictions and, related to this, the Malawian government's decision to reduce the number of IPTE students nationwide are limiting the impact of the project/programme.

General conclusions/lessons learned

- (Preventive) maintenance is necessary to prevent major damage and ensure sustainability. If only very limited public funds are available for maintenance and repair measures, the building design should be as low-maintenance as possible.
- However, when there is a high demand for additional infrastructure within a given investment framework, it is necessary to weigh up cost considerations and durability when selecting the design and thus the building materials. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that more appealing designs can contribute to an improvement in the learning environment.
- In order to ensure that defects are reported and warranty claims are made, it makes sense to systematically and sustainably embed knowledge about warranty processes among those responsible (from school management to ministerial level).
- Well-trained female teachers can serve as role models for girls. Safe accommodation can help to attract female teachers to schools and encourage female student teachers to study. Fencing the outdoor area of the accommodation, including the open-plan kitchen and bathroom, creates a protected space.
- Fencing off the entire school grounds would also be a great advantage if the schools/training centres are located near commercial centres, for example. This would reduce theft of mobile items (e.g. mobile hand washing facilities including plastic canisters with taps) and prevent vandalism.
- When using mobile elements (such as hand washing facilities in the form of mobile plastic canisters), it should be ensured that they can be stored easily and securely when not in use (e.g. to protect them from theft or vandalism) and that they are user-friendly to install when in use.

Rating according to OECD DAC criteria

Relevance

1. Alignment with policies and priorities

At the time of the PA, improving education was one of the most important objectives of the *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy* (MGDS II, 2011–2016). The Malawian government had also presented a longer-term strategic plan for the education sector in the form of the *National Education Sector Plan* (NESP, 2008–2017), which set out the guidelines for reforms in the sector. The *Education Sector Implementation Plan 2014–2017* (ESIP II), adopted in August 2014, formed the basis for donor support, which strove for equal access, increasing quality and relevance of education, and optimised management of education administration. The FC measure thus fitted into the relevant national strategies NESP and ESIP II. The *National Education Sector Investment Plan* (NESIP 2020–2030), adopted in 2020, represents the current strategic framework and the continuation of the education strategy. The development strategy "Vision Malawi 2063", published in 2020, also emphasises the importance of education in the development of human capital with a view to transforming the economy.

After Malawi committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in 2015, the government joined the global commitment to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all as part of the Sustainable Development Goals SDG 4.

As outlined in the Priority Strategy Paper on *Basic Education in Malawi* (2010), development cooperation between Malawi and Germany in the education sector is guided by the national education strategy. Particular attention should be paid to, among other things, effective teacher training as the key to improving the quality of education. Promoting teacher training as a key factor for high-quality education is also in line with the *BMZ position paper: High-Quality Education* (2025). Since 2020, the BMZ has been promoting basic education primarily (except in crisis contexts) through multilateral mechanisms such as the *Global Partnership for Education* (GPE)³ and *Education Cannot Wait* (ECW – crisis regions), rather than through bilateral cooperation as before. Through the international network *Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030*, the BMZ is also helping to train more teachers.

2. Alignment with the needs and capacities of the stakeholders and beneficiaries

The project's target group were primarily teacher training students, who were to benefit from an increase in the quality of practical teacher training through an improvement in the framework conditions at TTCs and TPSs. This is also reflected in the fact that the selection of learning institutions to be supported was not based on all primary schools in Malawi, but on primary schools that were linked to TTCs as TPSs. Against the backdrop of a severe shortage of adequate school infrastructure due to the increasing number of pupils in primary education, the measures addressed an important need of the target group for appropriate learning and teaching conditions within the framework of training. At the same time, the measures were also intended to meet the needs of primary school pupils and teachers at the TPSs, who also benefited from an improvement in school infrastructure. It should be noted that the problem of inadequate school infrastructure existed not only at TPSs, but across the board at most primary schools in the country – with potentially even greater needs. In this respect, it could be argued whether improving the TPS infrastructure was the biggest bottleneck. However, the funding volume of EUR 25 million was not intended for nationwide measures and the programme had a clear focus on teacher training.

In line with the results of the feasibility study and the MoE's proposal, the TTCs were selected in the districts of Lilongwe, Dedza and Blantyre. The participating TPSs were selected on the basis of pre-agreed criteria, including qualitative aspects such as an acceptable, well-maintained condition of the existing school buildings and teaching environment with experienced mentors, a pupil-teacher ratio of less than 1:80, status as a TPS for 5 years, a low teacher absenteeism rate, confirmation from the responsible TTC that the safety of its teacher training students is guaranteed at the respective TPS based on experience, year-round access to the school by road, and a substantial investment requirement ($\geq$ EUR 200,000). In addition, support from the community and a well-functioning parent-teacher association and school management committee were prerequisites. In this respect, the selection fell on those TPSs whose condition and management suggested a long service life for the infrastructure to be built. This approach seems reasonable in order to use the FC funds in the most efficient way and with the most sustainable impact. The planned infrastructure measures themselves were based on the priorities specified by the schools (see chapter on effectiveness).

³ As a member of the G8, Germany is a co-founder of the Education for All (EFA) Fast Track Initiative, which was created by the G8 countries and the World Bank in spring 2002 against the backdrop of the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 and the results of the Monterrey Conference. Its aim is to make additional funds available for education in developing countries with sustainable and realistic basic education policies, beyond the existing bilateral and multilateral support. Additional donor contributions are explicitly linked to improved sector policies and greater accountability for processes and results on the part of the partner countries. In 2011, EFA was renamed the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

By providing safe accommodation, the project/programme aimed in particular to improve the conditions for female teacher training students and teachers. In addition, hygiene requirements, especially for girls and women, were to be taken into account as part of the improvement of sanitary facilities. With St. Joseph's TTC in Dedza, a TTC was selected with a catchment area in which only female teacher training students are trained. Well-trained female teachers can serve as role models for girls. Education for girls and women improves their social position in the long term and contributes to gender equality.

3. Appropriateness of design

From a technical and organisational perspective, it was planned that, due to limited capacities, the implementing organisation would be supported by an international consultant in the implementation of the programme and the supervision of the construction work. This distribution of responsibilities also appears sensible in retrospect. The financial volume allowed for selective support for TTC and TPS and appears appropriate for this purpose.

As part of the audit of the project/programme, the following outcomes were formulated as objectives: "Improving the quality of practical teacher training at selected TPS by improving the framework conditions for teacher training students" and "Contributing to improving learning conditions for pupils and teaching conditions for teachers in primary schools". As a general rule, composite objectives should be avoided, i.e. the formulation of objectives should focus on a single issue as far as possible. Given that the selection of learning institutions to be supported was not based on all primary schools in Malawi, but focused on primary schools that were linked to the selected TTCs as TPS, the emphasis here is clearly on improving the quality of practical teacher training. Nevertheless, in addition to teacher training students, primary school children and teachers, who are also part of the target group, benefit equally from the structural improvement of the infrastructure. Thus, the cost estimate, as well as the subsequent implementation, does not focus on measures that solely benefit teacher training students. In this respect, the evaluation has adjusted the target formulation at the outcome level as follows: *Increasing the quality of practical teacher training in primary schools at selected TPS in Malawi by improving the framework conditions, especially for student teachers.*

In order to assess the achievement of the target at the outcome level, indicators were formulated in particular to measure the extent to which the target group benefits from the use of a needs-based school infrastructure in terms of an improved teaching and learning environment (pupil/classroom ratio, capacity versus utilisation of training places in TTCs, TPSs and accommodation for student teachers). These appear to be appropriate. Sufficient utilisation of the TTCs is, of course, a prerequisite for the improved infrastructure at the TPSs to be used during practical teacher training. In addition, an indicator was formulated to measure the motivation of teachers (mentors) at selected TPSs. In principle, it seems plausible that improved motivation among teachers (mentors) will have a positive effect on the training of student teachers. To this end, four indicators were selected that are assumed to influence teacher satisfaction and motivation (ratios: teachers/teacher houses, pupils/teachers, pupils/classrooms and the transition rate of pupils from primary to secondary school). A weighted average was to be calculated from the percentage achievement of these indicators. Although the transition rate is still collected at national level, no information is collected on a pupil's previous primary school, which would make it possible to determine how many pupils from a particular primary school have transitioned to secondary school. This means that the weighted indicator cannot be calculated as planned. Nevertheless, the evaluation uses the teacher/teacher house ratio as a target indicator – as well as the occupancy rate of the houses at the time of the evaluation – and considers the pupil/teacher ratio in the overall assessment. In addition, there are other factors that can influence teacher motivation and teaching and learning conditions in general, including, for example, adequate provision of learning and teaching materials, timely payment of salaries, the commitment of school management, etc. These factors are also taken into account in the evaluation as far as possible.

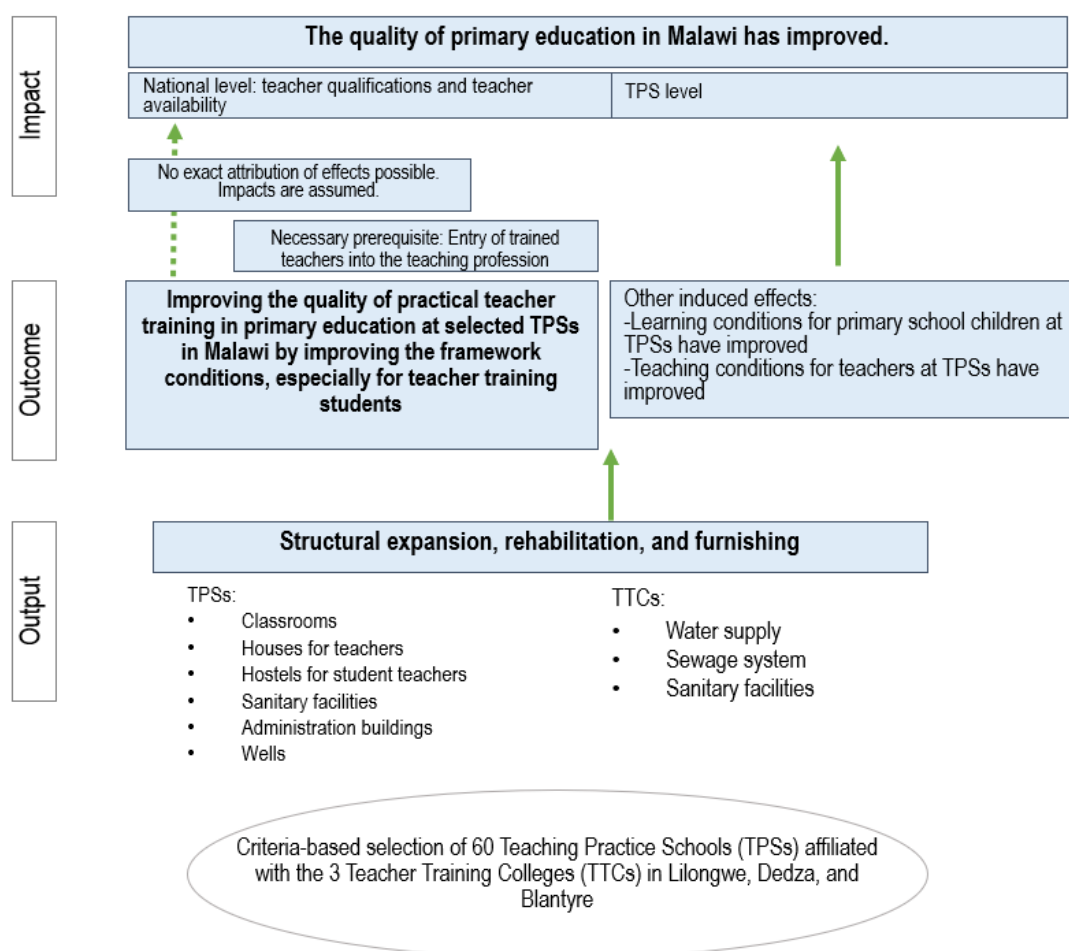


Figure 3: Reconstructed impact logic.

Source: Own illustration.

The impact-level objective defined at the time of the audit was to contribute to the achievement of the German development cooperation programme's objective in the field of basic education in Malawi. This objective was to improve access to, quality, efficiency and management of basic education. The formulation of the objective is too broad in relation to the project/programme and is partly at the output level (access). Therefore, the impact-level objective was modified as follows in the evaluation: *The quality of primary education in Malawi has improved.*

It seems plausible that improved teacher training can structurally influence the quality of education. However, the chain of effects from improving the infrastructure of learning facilities to improving the quality of primary education is long, and it is not possible to attribute the effects at national level precisely to the FC project/programme. A necessary prerequisite for the training of primary school teachers to lead to an improvement in primary education is the actual nationwide entry of trained teachers into the teaching profession. Ideally, the proportion of teacher training students who enter the teaching profession after graduation could be used as an additional indicator. As this data is not collected by the TTCs, the number of new teachers entering the teaching profession nationwide is used as a proxy indicator in the evaluation. Although this indicator does not measure the quality of primary education, it is more directly related to the project/programme and links the outcome and impact levels.

Ultimately, the interaction of all impact factors is decisive in terms of achieving the objectives. In addition to teacher training, these include curricula and content, infrastructure (including sanitation and learning materials, even in non-subsidised schools), school leadership and management, teacher motivation, parental and community involvement, financing of salaries and materials, and maintenance and upkeep. At the direct level of the TPS, it seems plausible that improved learning and teaching conditions for primary school children and teachers will have a direct positive impact on the quality of basic education in schools. Therefore, both national values and values at the level of the supported TPS are used for the impact-level indicators, as far as possible.

The design of the measure followed a holistic approach to sustainability: the use of improved educational infrastructure in Malawi contributes in the long term to an improved learning and teaching situation, especially for teacher training students. Other beneficiaries include pupils and teachers, who also benefit from the improved infrastructure measures. This can contribute to improving the quality of basic education, for example by reducing dropout and repetition rates. Improving the level of education is an essential prerequisite for reducing poverty and achieving sustainable economic growth through increased productivity.

Overall, the project appears conceptually suitable for contributing to the goal of the development cooperation programme, which aimed, among other things, to improve the basic education of the population.

4. Adaptability – response to change

The project/programme was designed as an 'open' programme, i.e. the selection of TPSs and TTCs to be supported and the planning of measures took place within the framework of programme implementation.

Rating summary of relevance: **successful (2) (for both phases)**

Strengthening the quality of education in primary schools remains a topic of great importance in Malawi. Overall, the relevance of the project/programme meets the expectations of a good project/programme.

Coherence

5. Internal coherence

The project was directly linked to the FC project Primary Education III (BMZ No. 2001 66 215), which involved the renovation and equipping of five TTCs (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Karonga, Kasungu and St. Joseph's) and the construction of additional accommodation for students at the TTCs. The rehabilitation of the water supply and sanitation system at TTCs complemented the measures of the completed project/programme.

The project was part of the development cooperation programme to promote basic education in Malawi, which ended on 30 June 2018 and comprised three technical cooperation projects and two financial cooperation projects that complemented each other:

- The TC supported the Malawian government in establishing a high-quality, sustainable and efficient system for training primary school teachers ('Improving basic education in Malawi', PN 14 229 22, 2018-2022). This includes training measures in the areas of teaching methods, inclusion, mentoring and coaching for teachers at TPSs in order to guide and support them in the practical training of student teachers. In the previous phase (2014-2018), the TC supported the MoE in developing the IPTE curriculum and subsequently contributed to its implementation and the *National Standards for Teacher Education* (NSTE). The content of the TC measures is therefore closely linked to the FC project/programme being evaluated. The positive synergies – particularly with regard to the mentoring and coaching measures – were highlighted several times by the interview partners during the on-site visits.
- Since 2005, the TC project/programme 'Nutrition and Access to Basic Education' (PN 2010 227 06, 2015 21 442; 2012-2022) has also promoted the topic of school meals. Undernourished and malnourished children fall ill more often and are more likely to miss school. The aim of the project/programme was to improve the nutritional status and school attendance of primary school pupils. Daily school meals and improved nutritional knowledge among all those involved were intended to contribute to this. The high relevance of school meals as an important factor in regular school attendance was confirmed by on-site visits (see chapter on impact) and thus complemented the FC project/programme.
- As part of the "Study and Specialist Fund for Education" (PN 2015 216 16; 2016-2018), TC supported the MoE in implementing the second implementation plan for the national education strategy.
- The FC contribution to the joint education basket (basket financing for basic education, 2005 66 513) was not continued due to difficulties in financial management – the funds not yet disbursed, amounting to EUR 5.5 million, were instead used to procure teaching and learning materials. As the on-site evaluation showed, the availability of sufficient teaching and learning materials is often a limiting factor, so the funds were put to good use in an alternative way.

Most recently, as part of the project/programme "Unlocking Talent: E-Learning for Primary Education" (2018 68 173), the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) promoted the quality of basic education by building learning centres

equipped with tablets, learning software, solar panels and other accessories, where pupils can work independently to supplement their lessons.

There were also synergies with GIZ's *Energising Development* (EnDev) project, as energy-efficient cookers were procured for the teachers' houses and hostels built as part of the FC project/programme.

Overall, the FC measure is consistent with the international community's goal of realising the human right to education by 2030 by creating equal access through the provision of needs-based school infrastructure.

6. External coherence

For the first time since the end of basket funding in 2013, a coordinated donor approach in the education sector was pursued again in 2017 through the *Education Sector Joint Fund* (ESJF). To this end, a *Joint Declaration of Intent* (JDI) was signed in March 2017 by the Malawian government and the donors Norway, Germany, the World Bank and UNICEF. In the ESJF, donors can earmark their funds for specific measures. Funds from the corresponding FC measure (BMZ No. 2017 67 615) are being invested in primary schools to improve WASH infrastructure. The construction of school buildings and teachers' houses in schools is being included as part of the reconstruction measures following the last cyclone.

In addition to the activities of the ESJF, individual projects are funded by various donors. Currently, in addition to German development cooperation, USAID, the EU, JICA, Norway, UNICEF, WFP and the WB, among others, are active in the primary education sector. In the area of school infrastructure, another project/programme worth mentioning is the *Malawi Education Reform Programme* (MERP, 2021-25), financed by the World Bank's *International Development Association* (IDA) and the GPE, under which more than 10,000 low-cost classrooms are currently being built in primary schools (see also the chapter on efficiency). This programme builds on the *Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project* (MESIP, 2017–21), which promoted primary education and piloted the construction of low-cost classrooms. Through the multilateral mechanisms of GPE, the BMZ is thus also indirectly supporting the aforementioned sector project. Regardless of the type of financing, all funds support the central priorities of the NESIP (2020–2030). Even though the government provided funds for the construction of additional classrooms as part of its COVID-19 measures, the construction of schools and other infrastructure in the education sector is largely dependent on donors due to budget limitations.

The most important donors in the education sector meet monthly in a formalised donor roundtable, the *Education Development Partner Group*, and coordinate their monthly discussions with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry.

Rating summary of coherence: **successful (2) (for both phases)**

In summary, it can be said that the project/programme complemented the measures taken within German development cooperation and the activities of other donors.

Effectiveness

7. Achievement of objectives

The objective adjusted within the framework of the EPE was to improve the quality of practical teacher training in primary education at selected TPSs in Malawi by improving the framework conditions, particularly for student teachers.

The following indicators were used to measure the outcome target:

Indicator	Status at time of audit	Target value at EPE (audit)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) Pupil/classroom ratio in the selected TPS	Average ratio at the TPSs assigned to the three TTCs: - Lilongwe TTC 167:1 - St. Joseph TTC 141:1 - Blantyre TTC 133:1	Reduction in the number of pupils per classroom by 15%	- Lilongwe TTC 100:1 - St. Joseph TTC 93:1 - Blantyre TTC 92:1	- Lilongwe TTC 104:1 - St. Joseph TTC 94:1 - Blantyre TTC 88:1 Target value achieved
(2) Appropriate use (capacity vs. utilisation) of TTCs and TPSs	<u>TTC level (in relation to IPTE 12):</u> Capacity vs. utilisation: - Lilongwe TTC 720 vs. 445 - St. Joseph TTC 600 vs. 291 - Blantyre TTC 540 vs. 328 <u>TPS level (number of teacher training students at the 20 TPSs supported by the project/programme per TTC (cumulative):</u> - Lilongwe TTC: 100 - St. Joseph TTC: 113 - Blantyre TTC: 106 <i>Note: For information on maximum capacity utilisation at TPS level, see explanation in the text.</i>	Full utilisation of TPSs and TTCs	<u>TTC level (in relation to IPTE 17):</u> Capacity vs. utilisation: -Lilongwe TTC 720 vs. 676 -St. Joseph TTC 600 vs. 620 -Blantyre TTC 540 vs. 529 <u>TPS level (number of teacher training students at the 20 TPSs supported by the project/programme per TTC (cumulative):</u> - Lilongwe TTC: 120 - St. Joseph TTC: 120 - Blantyre TTC: 120	<u>TTC level (in relation to IPTE 19):</u> Capacity vs. utilisation: -Lilongwe TTC 720 vs. 212 -St. Joseph TTC 600 vs. 236 -Blantyre TTC 540 vs. 171 <u>TPS level (number of teacher training students at the 20 TPSs supported by the project/programme per TTC (cumulative):</u> Not at full capacity at the time of the EPE Target value not achieved
(3) Improved motivation of teachers (mentors) at selected TPS	Average teacher/teacher house ratio at supported TPSs: 9:1	The ratio is decreasing	/	Average teacher/teacher house ratio at supported TPSs: 6:1 Target value achieved

Table 2 : Outcome target achievement

Source: Final Completion Report, TTCs, MoE

The average pupil/classroom ratio (indicator 1) of the selected 60 TPSs fell from 147:1 in 2017 to 95:1 in 2024 (Lilongwe TTC schools: 104:1; St. Joseph TTC schools: 94:1, Blantyre TTC schools: 88:1), representing an average decrease of 35% and meeting the target. This reflects an improved teaching and learning environment due to smaller class sizes. Nevertheless, the ratio is still above the national target of 80:1, which is to be achieved by 2030. As there is considerable variation in class sizes depending on the school and standard, pupil/classroom ratios of 150 or more were also observed during the site visit.

Adequate capacity utilisation (indicator 2) is a necessary prerequisite for teacher training students to benefit fully from the improved infrastructure. Decisions on admission and the allocation of students to TTCs – taking into account bed capacity – are made at national level. Capacity has been gradually expanded in recent years: the number of TTCs rose from 14 (8 state-run, 6 private) in the 2015/16 academic year to 20 (11 state-run and 9 private) in the 2023/24 academic year – corresponding to an increase in potential bed capacity from 3,654 to approximately 9,000 nationwide at 100% utilisation. Recently, however, there has been a decline in enrolment numbers at TTCs, resulting in only 30% of capacity being utilised.⁴ The Malawian government's decision to reduce the number of students nationwide had its rationale in the low absorption rate of previous years' graduates into the teaching profession (see also the chapter on 'overarching developmental impact').

Capacity utilisation at the level of the supported TTCs. While there was some overcapacity in previous years, the current utilisation of bed capacity at the TTCs (Blantyre TTC: 540, St. Joseph TTC: 600, Lilongwe TTC: 720) is significantly below capacity (see dotted line in Figure 4). The number of students enrolled in IPTE cohort 18 (i.e. starting in 2023) fell by an average of 65% compared to IPTE cohort 19 (i.e. starting in 2024) (see Figure 4). However, in discussions with the MoE, it was announced that the enrolment rate should be increased again in the future.

⁴ MoE (2024): The 2024 Education Sector Report.

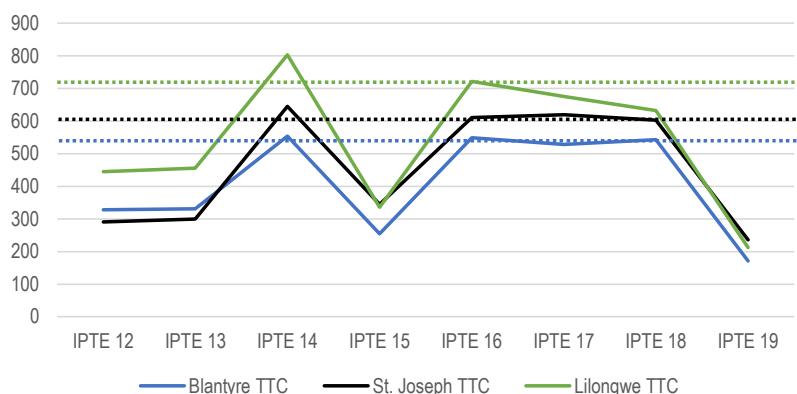


Figure 4: Bed capacity (dashed line) versus number of enrolled students (solid line) in the three funded TTCs
Source: TTCs; own illustration

Utilisation at the level of the funded TPSs. At the time of the PA, an average of 6 training places for teacher training students per TPS was assumed. This corresponds to the number of beds provided in the hostels built under the project/programme per TPS. It is rather unlikely that the number of beds for teacher training students at the TPSs increased as a result of the project/programme, as accommodation for teachers was often made available to students beforehand or they had to find accommodation outside the campus. As 20 TPS per TTC benefited from the project/programme, a total of 120 (6*20) places for practical training per TTC was assumed. As confirmed on site, occupancy can also be expanded if there are more teacher training students, so there is a certain degree of variability. At the time of the final inspection (FI), an average occupancy rate of 120 places per TTC had been achieved at the schools. The declining enrolment figures for teacher training students at the TTC level reflect the occupancy rate at the TPS level: at the time of the evaluation, the funded training capacities at the TPS level were not fully utilised. This applies in particular to the use of hostels and associated latrines, as all other parts of the infrastructure also benefit the school's pupils and teachers. In the TPSs visited as part of the evaluation, the number of teacher training students completing their practical semesters at the school varied between 3 and 6.

Furthermore, it seems plausible that improved motivation among teachers (mentors) has a positive effect on the training of student teachers (indicator 3). The number of accommodations available for teachers (mentors) on campus was identified as a key factor in terms of satisfaction and motivation. As a rule, the usage fees for this accommodation are significantly lower than the market rent outside the campus. Another advantage is that it saves on commuting time between home and work. The teacher/teacher house ratio fell on average from 9:1 in 2017 to 6:1 in 2024. Although this is a significant improvement, there is still a clear shortage of teacher accommodation. In addition, there are other factors that can influence the motivation of mentors, including, for example, the timely payment of teachers' salaries, adequate provision of learning and teaching materials, and the commitment of school management, as discussed in the next section.

8. Contribution to the achievement of objectives

Overall, the project comprised three components: financing infrastructure and equipment investments in selected TPSs, renovation measures for the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities in the three TTCs, and support for the implementing agency in the form of consulting services for the implementation of the project. During the evaluation mission, all three TTCs were visited, as well as a random sample of 10 of the 60 TPSs supported by the programme where the infrastructure measures undertaken were most extensive.

At TTC level

The renovation of the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities at the Lilongwe TTC in Lilongwe, the St. Joseph TTC in Bembeke in the Dedza district and the Blantyre TTC in Blantyre City was completed by September 2022. While the systems at St. Joseph TTC and Lilongwe TTC were fully functional and operational, the site visit to TTC Blantyre revealed that the water supply was not working properly. Only one of two pumps is operational, the solar system is only partially functional, and the water tanks cannot be filled to maximum capacity. The latter is apparently due to the insufficient diameter of the transmission line from the borehole to the tank.

At the TPS level

The expansion of infrastructure in the selected TPSs included the construction of classrooms, houses for teachers, hostels for teacher training students, sanitary facilities and administrative rooms, the provision of furniture, the construction of wells and the installation of solar systems in both the teachers' houses and the hostels. The actual number of classrooms per school was based on demand. A total of 154 double classroom blocks were built, 46 new administrative buildings were constructed and 14 others were renovated. The houses for teachers, hostels and sanitary facilities were distributed equally among the 60 schools. In addition, a well equipped with a manual hand pump was drilled at each school. All construction work was completed by the end of September 2022, meaning that the output-level target was achieved, albeit with a 10-month delay. The delay was primarily due to the impact of Covid-19 on the procurement of materials – in particular steel, the main material used for the frame structure and roof truss systems. Furniture was provided for all schools by May 2022, also with a Covid-19-related delay.

On site, it became apparent that the schools are fulfilling their performance mandate and that the created capacities are being used intensively. Whereas previously some lessons had to be held outdoors under trees due to a lack of classrooms, the construction of additional classrooms now means that most lessons are held indoors. Teacher training students, mentors and pupils appreciated the brightness, the pleasant indoor climate provided by ceiling fans and breeze blocks, and the protection from dust afforded by the masonry extending above seat height, which also protects learners from outside distractions. In addition, the walls of the new classrooms are smooth and suitable for displaying learning materials, which is common practice in Malawian primary schools. The schools were also furnished so that most of the children in the new classrooms have benches and tables at their disposal, whereas pupils in the old classrooms typically sit on the floor. The building design, with a basic framework (frame) made of steel beams, stands out clearly from the previous school infrastructure, which typically consisted of fired bricks and a roof structure made of wooden beams, often built 30 years or more ago. The stable construction was highlighted very positively by the users ("executive classrooms"). The schools visited ensured that the new classrooms were used by teacher training students for practical training, so that they could benefit directly from the new infrastructure.

While the majority of TPS schools operate a single teaching shift, two of the schools visited, which have a particularly high number of pupils, have introduced a two-shift system. At another school, temporary roofings were installed between or on existing building sections to provide protection from the sun and rain during outdoor lessons. Due to high demand, the management of another school decided to convert the staff room into a permanent classroom. Although this undoubtedly signals the continuing high demand for classrooms, the schools' response can be interpreted as a sign of very positive ownership.

The administrative buildings, sanitary facilities and wells constructed as part of the project/programme were shown to be in full use during the on-site visit. Like the classrooms, the sanitary facilities stood out clearly from the previous infrastructure, which was partly disused or in very poor condition and did not offer any protected space. The new sanitary facilities are clearly separated by gender and offer the possibility of locking the doors from the inside, thus providing a certain degree of privacy, which is an important aspect for girls in particular with regard to school attendance. When handed over, the sanitary facilities were equipped with a hand washing facility (mobile plastic canister with tap) outside the toilets. Unfortunately, these were no longer available at any of the schools visited (theft, no longer functional or stored in the equipment room) – in a few cases, alternatives were provided instead by installing a hand washing facility in front of the classrooms.

The wells equipped with hand pumps not only supply water to the school itself, but also to the surrounding communities. As such, they were heavily used. Many of the pumps already showed signs of heavy use, some were in need of repair or no longer worked at all (see chapter on sustainability).

The newly built hostels were greatly appreciated by the student teachers as they provide safe accommodation on campus. The outdoor area – including the kitchen and bathroom – is surrounded by a wall and can be locked. This provides a protected space and is a great advantage, as many of the schools are located near commercial centres. This advantage was particularly emphasised by female teacher training students.

Basically, two IPTE cohorts are always trained at the same time, with one cohort undergoing theoretical training at the TTCs while the other completes practical semesters at the TPSs. Due to the revised curriculum in 2017, which now follows a "2 IN-2 OUT-2 IN" training structure, there may be idle periods at the TPSs, i.e. there is only one cohort at the TTCs, but none at the TPSs. To avoid vacancies in the hostels, some schools rent them out temporarily to teachers, ensuring that the teachers leave the hostels at the end of the period, while other schools keep the hostels free for teacher training students.

The houses for teachers were fully occupied at all TPSs visited. Like the rest of the infrastructure that had been built, these stood out significantly in terms of quality from the previously existing buildings. The need for additional teacher accommodation was emphasised – also against the background that this has a positive effect on teacher motivation and is a strong incentive to recruit teachers.

The installation of solar panels to supply electricity to both teachers' houses and hostels was greatly appreciated, but it became apparent at many schools that these could no longer be used to their full potential due to defective batteries or, in one school, were no longer available due to theft.

Overall, it seems undisputed that the project/programme has contributed significantly to improving the quality of practical teacher training at the selected TPSs. In addition to the teacher training students, teachers and pupils alike benefited from the improved conditions – even at times when teacher training is not taking place at the TPSs. The urgent need for adequate school infrastructure was addressed: the construction of new classrooms provides protection from rain, storms and sunlight and reduces climate-related lesson cancellations. The provision of safe housing improves the conditions for female teacher training students and teachers in particular. The new sanitary facilities take into account the hygiene requirements of girls and women in particular. Adequate sanitary facilities are also an important tool for promoting school attendance, especially among girls. In addition, the water supply has been secured. The measures have thus led to a significantly improved teaching and learning environment, even though the need for further school infrastructure remains acute.

In addition, there are other factors that can influence the learning and teaching environment. The following impressions were noted on site:

- *Equipment:* All interviews reported a significant lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, with the shortage of textbooks for higher standards being the most acute. With the exception of the newly built classrooms, there were mostly no tables and chairs available for the pupils.
- *Access:* Primary education is free in Malawi, with the exception of the cost of school uniforms for children, other materials and a fee of 1,000 MK (equivalent to ~ 0.5 EUR as of 06/2025) per semester, which is used, for example, to print exam materials. According to the latest figures, the net enrolment rate (NER) nationwide was 89% in 2024 (boys: 86%, girls: 92%) – with slight fluctuations in recent years (90% in 2020, 88% in 2021 and 2022, 91% in 2023) and a consistently higher NER for girls. However, the difference is small, suggesting balanced participation of both genders at the start of primary education. The gender distribution of pupils enrolled in the supported TPSs was almost equal, at 51% and 49% respectively. In principle, all TPSs and TTCs are accessible during the rainy season. The new infrastructure at the TPSs also enables barrier-free access.

Remuneration, attendance of teaching staff and teacher training:

- It is planned that student teachers will receive remuneration during their practical training. However, the interviews revealed significant delays in payment, which undoubtedly has a negative impact on motivation.
- The presence of teachers (mentors) is an essential prerequisite for lessons to take place. However, according to school administrators, this was not identified as a significant problem. Delays in the payment of salaries were also not a hindering factor. The pupil/teacher ratio fell from 65:1 in 2017 to 58:1 in 2024, meaning that the national target of 60:1 for the 60 TPSs was achieved on average.
- While training measures for teachers at the TPSs were offered as part of a TC project/programme, as described under coherence, to support them in the practical training of student teachers, this provision has been lacking since the measure ended. The desire for training opportunities was expressed by both the TPSs and TTCs.

Ownership and management:

- Most school administrators demonstrated a high level of ownership, which had a positive effect on the learning and teaching environment. As described above, ways were found to create additional teaching opportunities. Old teacher accommodation that no longer met the needs of the teaching staff was rented out to the community at one TPS, for example, in order to generate income for the purchase of firewood for the school kitchens.
- On site, the impression was that the schools were generally well supported by the community (*School Management Committee (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and Mother Groups*) – for example, through the construction of additional classrooms. According to some school administrators, the improved infrastructure had a very positive effect on community ownership.

9. Quality of implementation

The MoE was the programme executing agency, which was supported in its implementation by an international consultant from 2017 onwards in planning and monitoring construction work and in coordinating the award of supply contracts for furniture. In addition to pandemic-related delays, according to the PCR, there were delays in the planning phase in obtaining approvals from the Malawian tax authority for duty-free and VAT-free goods. Although these were ultimately approved and therefore had no

negative impact on the achievement of objectives, they led to considerable delays, which were related to the limited capacity of the implementing agency.

After the warranty period expired, Blantyre TTC still suffered from a non-functioning water supply. The reason for this is that the local contractor failed to remedy the defects despite being requested to do so. As a result, the guarantee was drawn (*retention money guarantee*) and the funds were repaid to KfW. These were transferred together with other remaining funds to the FC programme "Basic Education Programme" (2017 67 615). From an evaluation perspective, it would have been desirable to use these funds to (re)establish a functioning water supply at Blantyre TTC. However, this would have required close coordination between TTC management, the implementing agency, the consultant and KfW, which was not the case in this instance.

At many TPSs, the solar power systems installed to supply electricity to teachers' houses and hostels were no longer fully functional due to defective batteries. However, the contracts for the solar systems provided guarantees for some components, namely batteries (5 years), inverters (10 years) and solar modules (10 years). At the time of the evaluation, the solar systems were still within the warranty period, so that repairs could have been requested. However, the school administrations were not aware of the existence of a warranty. According to the implementation consultant, the schools were instructed at handover and at the end of the warranty period to report any defects to the MoE's *Infrastructure Management Unit*. Once the defects had been confirmed, the MoE should have clarified the warranty issues with the respective contractors. With a view to future construction projects, it would be important to anchor this knowledge among those responsible (from school management to ministerial level) when the documents are handed over, so that the warranty can be invoked in the event of a defect.

10. Unintended effects (positive or negative)

The use of IPE steel beams in all buildings posed a challenge for the local market, as a large proportion of these elements had to be imported. This situation was exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on logistics. Ultimately, this led to delays and had a financial impact on the overall budget (see chapter on efficiency).

Rating summary of effectiveness: **moderately successful (3) (for both phases)**

The construction expansion, renovation and furnishing significantly improved the quality of practical teacher training at the selected TPSs. At the same time, there is still a high demand for adequate school infrastructure and fundamental improvements to the accompanying framework conditions. The government's decision to reduce enrolment numbers at TTCs due to budget constraints led to underutilisation of capacity at the time of the evaluation, despite the continuing high demand for well-trained teachers. However, the majority of the infrastructure established under the project benefits not only teacher training students, but also teachers and pupils, and was being used intensively. Unfortunately, potential remained untapped in terms of implementation. Against the background of the above-mentioned aspects, the effectiveness of the project/programme is therefore assessed as moderately successful.

Efficiency

11. Production efficiency

The total investment volume for improving the quality of practical teacher training by improving the framework conditions amounted to EUR 28.2 million (input). Of this, 88% was financed by the FC grant and approximately 12% was contributed by Malawi. The own contribution included 16.5% VAT on the costs of construction and furniture, as well as the operating and personnel costs of the participating TPSs and TTCs.

Of the total FC-financed budget, 76% was allocated to infrastructure measures at the TPSs and 7% to renovation measures for the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities at the three TTCs. The costs of these measures rose by 12% during the construction phase compared to the original plan, mainly due to adjustments to the building design after handover and the installation of solar panels on teachers' houses and hostels. These additional measures were covered by the project/programme's contingency fund. Some of the original ideas, such as the construction of a multi-purpose hall and the renovation of old classrooms and teachers' houses, could not be implemented due to budget constraints. The costs for furniture and equipment were 47% lower than planned, at 4%, as the actual quotes were cheaper than expected.

It is questionable whether the outputs of the measure could have been increased, for example by contributing the funds to a basket financing scheme. However, this was not a realistic alternative at the time of planning, as this previously existing financing approach was discontinued due to problematic audit results and the Cashgate scandal⁵.

The biggest discrepancy between the programme plan and completion was the 16-month extension to the duration. The main reasons for this were construction delays due to the pandemic and the limited management capacities of the implementing agency.

With regard to coordination and management costs, approximately 11% was earmarked for the consultant – this rose to 13% as the programme was extended by 16 months due to initial challenges in planning and construction delays. Design costs were kept within limits as a standard design was applied to all schools. On the logistical side, however, the effort was greater, as planning and construction took place at 60 different schools across the country. Even considering that the project/programme was implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, the overall coordination and management costs are appraised as reasonable.

12. Allocation efficiency

Building design of the school infrastructure. During the various planning phases, it was decided to build the infrastructure using a standardised steel frame and stabilised soil blocks⁶ for the walls. The main advantages of the steel frame construction are the long-term durability of the material itself, the possibility of flexible future use, as the walls can be easily removed and rearranged (the walls are not part of the supporting structure), and, after the steel frame and roof have been constructed, the ability to carry out construction activities in dry conditions during the rainy season. The main disadvantage is the high cost.

A possible alternative would have been, for example, to use cement blocks for the walls and wooden trusses and trapezoidal steel sheets for the roof. This is currently being implemented as part of the MERP project, which plans to build a total of 10,000 low-cost classrooms and 1,000 sanitary facilities at a cost of USD 18,000 per classroom block and USD 6,500 for sanitary facilities.

Given the extremely high demand for additional school infrastructure and against the backdrop of scarce resources, the question arises as to whether the focus of the building design should have been on more cost-effective materials while still ensuring a stable construction. Even though the chosen steel construction is undoubtedly impressive in terms of durability, the alternative construction – presumably at the expense of potential service life – could have reached a significantly larger target group due to the significantly higher number of rehabilitated TPS. As described above, a comparison could be made on site with the existing infrastructure, some of which was built 30 years ago or more and was still functional. In the recently completed FC project/programme "Unlocking Talent: E-Learning for Primary Education", the design of the learning centres was also based on cement blocks and a wooden roof construction.

The planned dimensions of the low-cost classroom blocks of around 20x8 m result in a price per square metre of approximately EUR 100/m². In comparison, the price per square metre in the FC project/programme was estimated at EUR 250/m², i.e. around two and a half times as much. However, it is important to note that the costs in the FC project/programme are actual costs, whereas the MERP approach uses planning costs. It remains to be seen whether the assumed costs of USD 18,000 will be sufficient. In general, when designing such project/programmes, a balance must be struck between maximising durability, which was the focus of the FC project/programme and led to the more cost-intensive steel construction, and maximising the number of classrooms, as was the case with the MERP.

It should also be noted that there was a fundamental difference between the two projects in terms of management. While the FC project was centrally managed by an international consultant who supervised all locations, MERP takes a decentralised approach that involves the local community, craftsmen and suppliers. However, this MERP approach would have been difficult to implement with the FC procedures, as the cash flows (many invoices from micro-enterprises and suppliers across the country) would have posed major challenges in terms of maintaining consistent quality and complying with environmental and social standards. For these reasons, experienced and qualified international consultants were deliberately employed for the implementation.

Teachers who live on campus must pay a fee to **use the teachers' houses**, which is significantly below the market price of a house outside the campus. While this undoubtedly benefits teacher motivation, a slight increase in fees for TPSs could be a way to generate additional funds.

Rating summary of efficiency: **moderately successful (3) (for both phases)**

In light of the above, overall efficiency is appraised as moderately successful.

⁵ The scandal was uncovered in 2013 and involved looting, theft and corruption in Capital Hill, the seat of government in Malawi.

⁶ The composition consists of approximately 60–70% earth, 20–30% coarse sand and 8–10% cement.

Impact

13. Overarching developmental changes

The objective adjusted within the framework of the EPE was to improve the quality of primary education in Malawi.

The following indicators were used to measure the impact target:

Indicator	Status at audit	Target value at EPE (audit)	Actual value at PCR	Actual value at EPE
(1) The average repetition rate in grades 1-8 of primary schools	21.9%	7%	26%	26% Target value not achieved
(2) Completion rate in grade 8 of primary schools – and the difference between boys and girls SDG 4.1.2: Completion rate for primary school	51% - Difference 9%	75% - Difference between boys and girls: 5%	48% - Difference between boys and girls 4%	45% - Difference between boys and girls 3% Target value partially achieved
(3) Proportion of children (aged 7-14) with basic reading and numeracy skills	/	/	/	Reading and writing skills in 18.9% of children aged 7-14 Numeracy skills: 12.6% Data insufficient
(4) Number of new teachers recruited to the teaching profession.	0	Trained teachers are recruited into the teaching profession	/	2,500 permanent 4,200 temporary Target value partially achieved

Table 3 : Impact target achievement

Source: MoE, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, 2021)

The national target according to NESIP was to reduce repetition rates in grades 1-8 of primary schools to 14% by 2025. Over time, these increased from an average of 22% in 2015 to 26% in 2024, significantly exceeding the national target. Repetition rates vary between grades, with the highest rates by far in grade 1 (and this has remained unchanged over time). This points to ongoing challenges in terms of school readiness and the effectiveness of early childhood education programmes. Overall, repetition rates for girls are slightly lower than those for boys, but there are no significant gender differences. At the time of the audit, the target indicator under the EZ programme (see Indicator 1) was 7%, which was even lower than the above-mentioned national target and was therefore not achieved.

Although the completion rate in grade 8 of primary schools rose from 51% in 2015 to 56% in 2022, it most recently fell to 45% (2024). While 56% of boys and 47% of girls completed primary school at the time of the audit, the trend appears to have reversed in the last two years. In 2024, 46% of girls and only 43% of boys completed primary school. Although the absolute disparity between the sexes has decreased, this has been to the detriment of boys. The education target of a 60% completion rate for 2025 therefore seems rather unlikely. At the time of the audit of the project/programme, a target value of 75% (see indicator 2) was set, which was not achieved overall.

Overall, the level of education in Malawi remains low. According to data from the *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey* (MICS, 2021), only 18.9% of children (aged 7-14) have basic literacy skills, i.e. are able to read a short story and answer five comprehension questions related to the story. Only 12.6% of children in the same age group had basic numeracy skills. The MICS module refers to learning outcomes expected for grades 2 and 3 in the areas of numeracy and reading. The proportion of children with basic reading and numeracy skills is higher in urban areas and among children from wealthy families.

14. Contribution to overarching intended developmental changes

It seems plausible that sufficiently qualified teachers play a key role in achieving an adequate quality of education in primary schools: well-trained teachers are a necessary condition for ensuring the transfer of knowledge to pupils. In order to improve the framework conditions for practical teacher training within the ITPE programme, the bottleneck in adequate school infrastructure that existed at the time of the PA was specifically addressed by the project/programme. With the TTC St. Joseph in Dedza, a TTC was also selected in which only female teacher training students are trained. Well-trained female teachers could serve as role models for girls. Education for girls and women improves their social position in the long term and thus contributes to gender equality.

The quality of practical teacher training will be reflected above all in the performance of the learners taught by the trained teachers during their service. This requires that they actually enter the teaching profession, and do so nationwide. For this reason, the number of new teachers entering the teaching profession is being introduced as an additional indicator in the evaluation. Although this indicator does not measure the quality of primary education, it is more directly related to the project/programme and links the outcome level with the impact level.

Figure 5 shows the development of the number of teachers in primary education since the project appraisal.

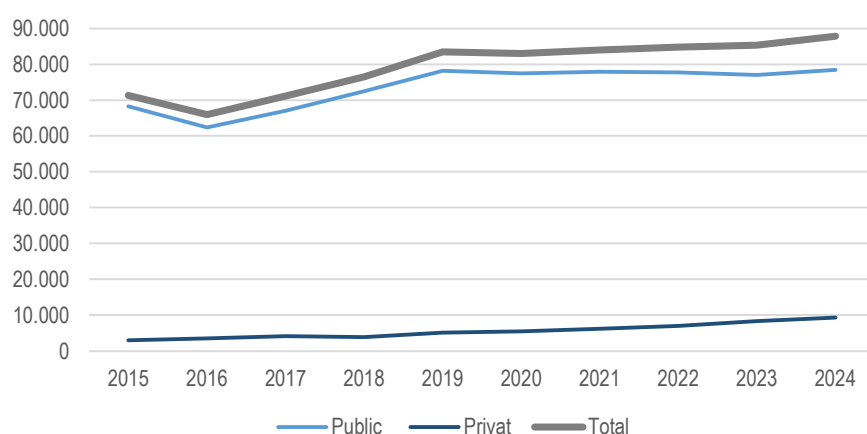


Figure 5: Number of teachers in primary education

Source: MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports; own illustration

While the number of teachers at private schools rose steadily, the number of teachers at public schools was subject to budget-related fluctuations. For example, at the time of the audit in 2015, there was a hiring freeze⁷, which meant that the total number of teachers decreased due to retirements. In the following years, however, the number of teachers was gradually increased. It rose from 71,334 in 2015 to 87,834 in 2024, representing an overall increase of 23% over the period. However, the total number of teachers employed in public schools has remained at an almost constant plateau since 2019. While 8,434 teachers (IPTE 10,11, ODL5) were permanently recruited in the 2018/19 school year, only 2,500 permanent and 4,200 temporary new hires took place via the MERP in the 2023/24 school year (indicator 4). In particular, there are repeated delays in recruitment. Currently, the IPTE cohorts 15, 16 and 17 have not yet been recruited, and IPTE 14 has only been partially recruited. Teacher training candidates who successfully complete the IPTE programme are not entitled to a position in the teaching profession, which means that they may have to wait several years before finding employment. In focus group discussions with student teachers, the question of why they had decided to study teaching despite this uncertainty was explored. One of the reasons given was the prospect of a secure, permanent job in the long term. In the meantime, they said, there was the possibility of seeking employment at a private school. Despite the obvious incentives to wait for a position at a public school, there is also the risk that trained teachers will never enter the profession if they find alternative employment in the meantime. The delays and the resulting long-term underutilisation of teaching capacity inevitably limit the impact of the project/programme.

From a methodological point of view, it should be noted that, with the FC funds limited to EUR 24.75 million, the quality of education in primary schools was naturally only promoted in specific areas, and it is therefore not possible to attribute the effects at national level precisely to the FC- project/programme. In addition, the underlying chain of effects from an

⁷ See here Asim et al. (2019): Moving teachers to Malawi's remote communities: A data-driven approach to teacher deployment. International Journal of Educational Development.

improvement in the infrastructure of learning facilities to an improvement in the quality of primary education is long and subject to the influence of other factors.

Impact factors relating to teachers

Teachers' level of training. In addition to the skills taught in the practical part of teacher training, the subject content provided for in the curriculum and to be taught theoretically by the TTCs is also of relevance. In this context, it is positive to note that the number of training teachers at TTCs has risen steadily in recent years – and at the same time, the average teacher-student ratio has fallen, standing at 18.9:1 in 2024, compared to 24.4:1 in 2021 and 32.5:1 in 2022 and 22.1:1 in 2023. However, when interpreting these figures, it should also be noted that the number of enrolled teacher training students has been declining since 2023.

There is currently considerable variation in the educational background of teachers: The majority, i.e. 55% of teachers employed in public schools in 2024, had completed their training under the IPTE programme, followed by the ODL programme (21%) and MIITEP (17%).

Teacher motivation/satisfaction. According to the *Malawi Longitudinal School Survey (MLSS, 2016)*, teacher absenteeism is not uncommon in schools in Malawi.⁸ The MoE has instructed all district education offices to introduce a time book system to record teaching time, teacher attendance and thus school efficiency. Despite this instruction, recording has not yet begun.⁹ Negative drivers of teacher motivation can include delays in salary payments. The vast majority of teachers in the MLSS (88%) had unpaid or delayed salary claims outstanding. In addition, teachers often have long commutes to school. On-campus accommodation for teachers can reduce commuting time and stress and help to reduce teacher absenteeism. However, EMIS data for 2024 shows a significant shortage of housing for teachers in all districts: the total demand (62,172) far exceeds the currently available accommodation (16,349).

Pupil-teacher ratio and geographical distribution. In line with the increase in the number of teachers, the pupil-teacher ratio fell from 67 in 2015 to 62 in 2024, with slight fluctuations, and the ratio of pupils to qualified teachers fell from 75 to 65 over the same period (see Figure 6, left). This suggests a positive trend, but the national target of 60:1 has not yet been achieved. The geographical distribution, as broken down in Figure 6 (right) for the year 2024, also shows considerable differences: The most remote areas are significantly underserved, with the highest pupil-teacher ratio of 74 – meaning that 26.54% of teachers are responsible for 31.64% of pupils. Urban areas, on the other hand, have the lowest ratio of 41 – here, 14.15% of teachers look after 9.32% of the pupil population. It seems plausible that the great inequality in the distribution of teachers is reflected in the learning ability of children, as described above. However, simply increasing the number of teachers in schools with a high pupil-teacher ratio does not necessarily remedy the situation, as most schools in Malawi do not have enough classrooms (see comments below).¹⁰

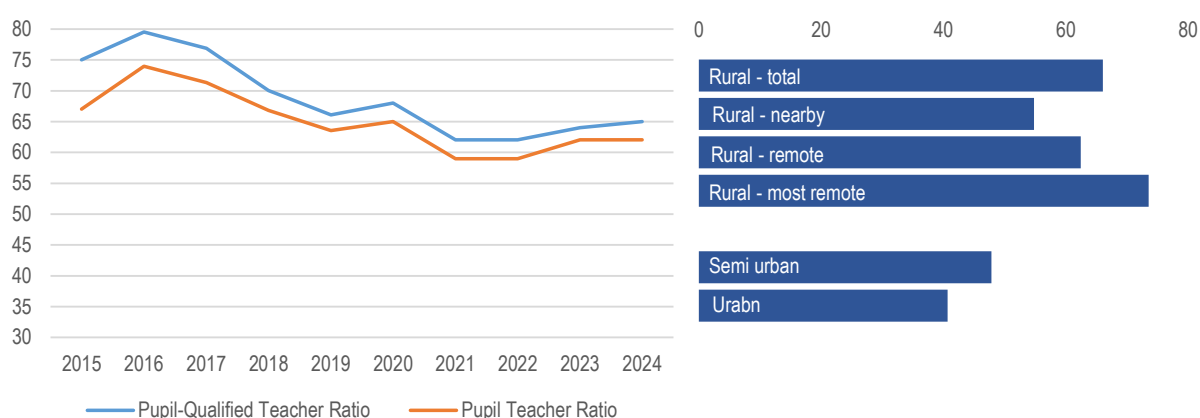


Figure 6: Pupil-teacher ratio (left) and geographical distribution in 2024 (right)

Source: MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports; own illustration

⁸ Compare here and below: Asim and Ravinder (2024): What Matters for Learning in Malawi? Evidence from the Malawi Longitudinal School Survey. International Development in Focus. World Bank.

⁹ MoE (2024). The 2024 Education Sector Report.

¹⁰ See World Bank (2017): Moving Teachers to Malawi's Remote Communities. A Data-Driven Approach to Teacher Deployment.

The Malawian government has pursued various approaches to mitigate inequalities in the distribution of teachers, including incentives for teachers and the targeted deployment of new teachers to remote areas.¹¹ Newly recruited teachers are assigned to districts by the MoE's *Directorate of Basic Education* (DBE), with teachers able to indicate their preferences. *District Education Managers* (DEMs) then assign the teachers allocated to them to schools. However, DEMs are limited in their ability to enforce teacher assignments due to rules and conventions. If teachers are dissatisfied with their school assignment, they can, for example, request a transfer on medical grounds if they submit a signed letter from a medical officer, or it is common for teachers to request a transfer to a school near their spouse's place of work. The latest EMIS data available shows that the most common reason for teachers leaving is a transfer to another school, followed by retirement.

Other influencing factors

Furthermore, other important factors in the chain of effects include the curricula and content of primary school education itself, pupil attendance, adequate infrastructure including sanitation and learning materials and their proper maintenance, good school leadership and management, parental and community involvement, and year-round accessibility of schools.

In response to growing demand due to rising enrolment figures, the number of classrooms nationwide has risen steadily: while the **number of primary school classrooms** stood at 40,535 in 2015, this rose to 51,630 by 2024. The average pupil-to-classroom ratio¹² fell from 126:1 in 2014 to 105:1 in 2024, but is still well above the government's target of 80:1. In 2024, most schools (64%) have no electricity, and the typical school has limited **handwashing and hygiene facilities** (one handwashing facility for every 188 pupils; one toilet for every 70 pupils). Adequate sanitation facilities are an important tool for promoting pupil attendance, especially among girls. The **availability of water** is also important in the fight against sanitary pandemics such as cholera, scabies and COVID-19. A significant number of schools have difficulty providing an adequate number of **textbooks**. In 2019, 64.50% of schools reported a pupil/textbook ratio greater than 3:1 – in 2024, this proportion rose even further to 86.34%. According to the MLSS findings, the existing physical infrastructure is often in need of repair: on average, more than a third of classrooms have cracked, damaged or broken walls, a fifth have a leaky or cracked roof, and more than half have uneven, cracked or potholed floors. Only 41% of pupils have a chair or desk.

In 2024, 12% of primary schools were located in urban areas, 3% in semi-urban areas and 85% in rural areas. The poor condition of access roads in rural areas – 80% of access roads are dirt roads – meant that 34% of schools were inaccessible during the rainy season.

There is currently no system in place to record **pupil attendance** in class. However, *mother groups* play an important role in schools in this regard as part of **parental and community involvement**. They were established by the MoE and help to reduce pupil absenteeism by tracking absences. They are also actively involved in the areas of menstrual hygiene, ending child marriage and reintegrating school dropouts. In 2024, there were 5,450 *Mother Groups* covering 76.6% of schools.¹³

It seems undisputed that the government's initiatives had a positive impact on the achievement of the intended development policy goals – however, despite investments and reform efforts, the system is still severely overburdened.

Impacts at the level of supported TPS

At the TPS level itself, it seems plausible that the improved learning and teaching conditions for primary school children and teachers have a direct positive impact on the quality of basic education in schools. Similar to the national level, albeit at a lower level, both the average repetition rate and the dropout rate of pupils show an adverse trend (see Figures 7 and 8). The average repetition rate at the 60 TPSs rose from 21% in 2016/17 to 25% in 2023/24, and the average dropout rate rose from 3% to 4%. Interviews with teachers and school principals conducted as part of the evaluation suggest that increasing poverty is the main cause of this development. Malawi has one of the highest poverty rates in the world – and the trend is rising. According to a 2019 household survey, 70% of the population lives on less than USD 2.15 per day. Half of the population falls below the minimum calorie intake of 2,215 calories per day.¹⁴ Malawi is severely affected by the climate crisis, which means crop failures, dwindling supplies and an inability to meet basic food needs. As a result, children are unable to concentrate or even attend school

¹¹ See here and below: Asim et al. (2019): Moving teachers to Malawi's remote communities: A data-driven approach to teacher deployment. International Journal of Educational Development.

¹² The ratio refers to permanent classrooms.

¹³ MoE (2024). The 2024 Education Sector Report.

¹⁴ World Bank (2024): Poverty & Equity Brief, Malawi.

because of hunger. Many of the schools visited have set up school kitchens that offer the children a bowl of maize porridge once a day to encourage parents to send their children to school.

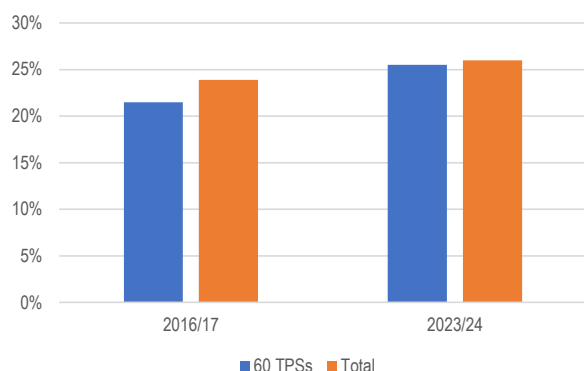


Figure 7: Repetition rates at the 60 supported TPSs and nationwide in primary education

Source: MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports; own illustration

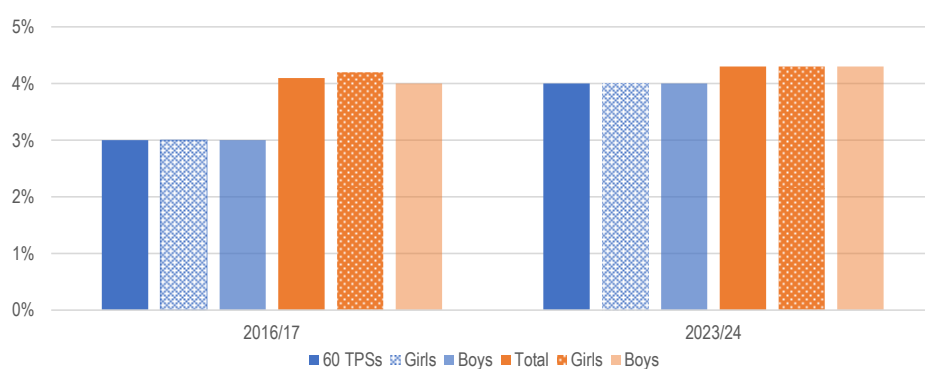


Figure 8: Dropout rates at the 60 supported TPSs and nationwide in primary education

Source: MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports; own illustration

Of the pupils who took the final audit at the end of eight years of primary education in the 2022/23 school year (*Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination, PSLCE*), an average of 91% passed the audit at the subsidised TPSs, an increase of 12 percentage points compared to the 2016/17 school year. Nationwide, the proportion of pupils who successfully passed the final examination also rose from 59% to 88%. The rate for girls was lower than that for boys, both at TPSs and nationwide (see Figure 9).

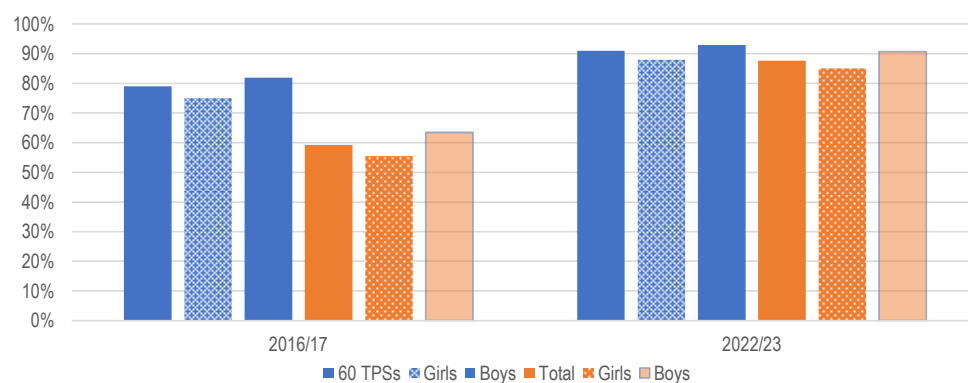


Figure 9: Percentage of pupils passing the final examination (PSLCE) – at the 60 supported TPSs and nationwide in primary education

Source: MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports; own illustration

Broad impact. The project/programme has the potential to structurally improve the quality of education in primary schools if the trained teachers actually enter the teaching profession nationwide. At the time of the evaluation, this cannot be conclusively validated. As described above, the nationwide recruitment of teachers is not evenly distributed, despite efforts by the government to deploy new teachers to remote areas. The most recently trained IPTE cohorts (IPTE 17 & 18), which benefited from the improved infrastructure, must first enter the teaching profession in order for the effects to materialise in the longer term. It is unlikely that this is already reflected in the current data. In addition, due to delays in recruitment, the trained cohorts are unlikely to have entered the state school system yet. If they do pursue a teaching career, they are more likely to seek employment in private schools. Furthermore, there is no data available that would allow the further careers of graduates to be tracked.

The construction of the established infrastructure itself could have served as a model if the design had been continued in the construction of further school infrastructure. According to the MoE, the design is highly appreciated, but proved too costly to replicate. Accordingly, a low-cost classroom design is being implemented in the current construction project under the MERP.

Neither the current MERP nor past projects/programmes by other donors have explicitly strengthened the framework conditions for practical teacher training by improving infrastructure. With regard to the development policy additionality, it cannot therefore be assumed that the positive effects that have occurred would have been achieved without the project/programme.

15. Contribution to overarching unintended developmental changes

There are no indications of overarching (unintended) development policy changes.

Rating summary of impact: **moderately successful (3) (for both phases)**

The Malawian primary school system has made remarkable progress in improving access to education – however, despite a supportive political and legal framework, the data still shows a low level of education in Malawi. The system continues to face the challenge of providing high-quality education in the face of rising student numbers. High repetition rates and low completion rates among primary school pupils are a significant source of inefficiency. There is still a high demand for school infrastructure, learning and teaching materials, and teachers in schools. The positive effects of qualified and trained teachers can only materialise if they are recruited into the teaching profession. However, due to the government's tight budget, there are significant delays in recruiting graduates. Against this background, the overarching developmental impacts are appraised as moderately successful.

Sustainability

16. Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders

Based on the *Transforming Education Summit (TES)*¹⁵ and the Tashkent Declaration¹⁶ of 2022, the Government of Malawi has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting education.

Government allocations averaging 25 per cent of public expenditure (excluding debt servicing) and 4 per cent of GDP between 2013 and 2024 demonstrate the high priority given to education spending. (see Figure 10). This is in line with the Incheon Declaration¹⁷ on inclusive education, which recommends that governments allocate between 4% and 6% of their GDP or 15% to 20% of public expenditure to education in order to achieve the SDG 4 targets.¹⁸

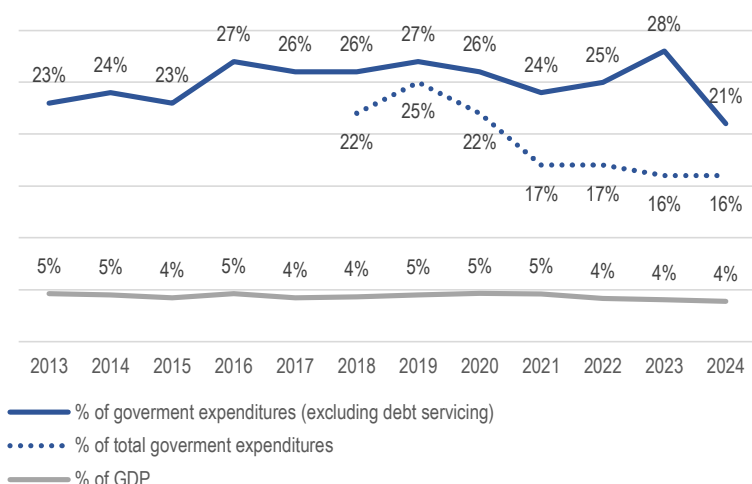


Figure 10: Public expenditure on education

Source: UNICEF Education Budget Brief 2023/24; MoE: 2023/24 Malawi Education Statistics Report; own illustration

Most of the statements relate to the basic education sector (see Figure 11). The percentage of the budget allocated to basic education ranged between 57% and 63% between 2019 and 2024. This is followed by funding allocations for higher education (average of 24% in the same period) and secondary education (14%). Management and administrative expenditure averaged 3%.

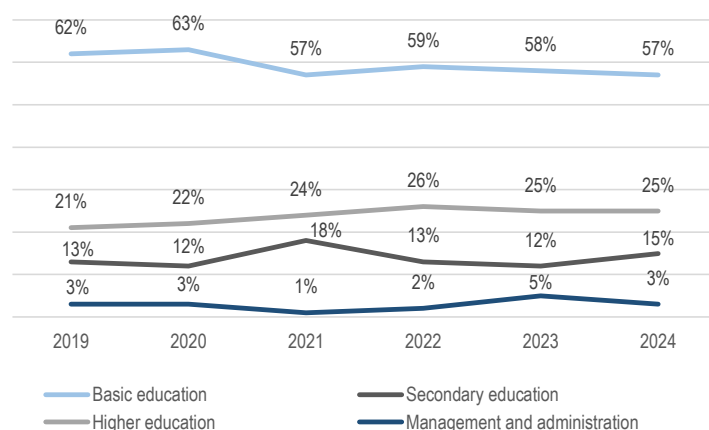


Figure 11: Distribution of expenditure on education

Source: MoE: 2023/24 Malawi Education Statistics Report; own illustration

¹⁵ This took place in September 2022 as part of the 77th UN General Assembly in New York and aimed to find answers to the global education crisis affecting equality, inclusion, quality and relevance in education. The summit is also intended to contribute to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 education goal (SDG 4).

¹⁶ The second UNESCO World Conference will meet in November 2022 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and formulated policy recommendations to provide guidance for the further development of early childhood education in the coming decade.

¹⁷ The Incheon Declaration was adopted on 15 May 2015 at the World Education Forum in Incheon, South Korea, and is the logical continuation of the Education For All Initiative and the Millennium Development Goals for education.

¹⁸ MoE 2023/24 Malawi Education Statistics Report

However, the share of education spending is increasingly being squeezed by rising debt servicing costs (see dotted line in Figure 10). In 2023/24, allocations for public debt servicing accounted for 24.6% of GDP, exceeding the education sector budget for the second consecutive fiscal year.¹⁹

On average, 85% of the education budget is used for recurrent expenditure, leaving only 15% for the creation or improvement of school infrastructure. The construction of schools and other infrastructure in the education sector is largely dependent on donors.

Based on UNICEF calculations, there was an average funding gap of 74% in the education sector for the period from 2017 to 2021. Education in Malawi is mainly financed from domestic resources. Data from the World Bank²⁰ show that 46% of funds are provided through the national budget and 39% of education funding is covered by private households for the payment of school fees and school-related expenses. Development partners contribute an estimated 15% of total education funding, mostly through extra-budgetary funds.

In order to maintain the positive effects, it is essential that adequate maintenance and repair of the infrastructure is established in relation to the specific measures of the project/programme. The *National Norms and Guidelines for Primary School Construction, Rehabilitation and Maintenance in Malawi*, formulated by the MoE in 2010, specify the responsibilities of actors at various levels of the administrative structure. The actors at the community/school level, represented by the SMC, are responsible for the preventive maintenance²¹ of schools. The costs are to be covered by the *School Improvement Grants (SIGs)* provided by the Ministry. The DEMs are responsible for corrective maintenance²². Despite the increase in the basic education budget, the tight financial situation poses a risk to the measures implemented with regard to the maintenance budget and the actual entry of graduates into the teaching profession (see also "overarching developmental impact").

17. Contribution to supporting sustainability capacities

The training of teachers requires, among other things, the existence of an adequate and functional school infrastructure. By improving the framework conditions through the construction of school infrastructure and equipping it, a contribution has been made to increasing the quality of practical teacher training. Buildings (furniture) have a longer (rather limited) life time, enabling teaching facilities to maintain positive effects from a purely technical point of view – depending on maintenance and repair (see next section) – (over a certain period of time). The climate-resilient construction of the buildings has currently proven to be sufficiently robust to withstand the latest cyclones.

To contribute to sustainability, an operation and maintenance concept in the local languages was provided to the schools as part of the project/programme. The school maintenance manual is primarily aimed at the SMC and was designed as a step-by-step guide, containing in particular daily, weekly and monthly preventive maintenance tasks required to keep the school in good condition. The manual also contains instructions for general cleaning of the facilities to ensure that the buildings remain usable and to prevent damage to structures and equipment. All schools were also equipped with a maintenance toolkit containing everything necessary to carry out the activities listed in the maintenance manual.

During implementation, *Community Liaison Officers (CLOs)* were hired to supervise the construction work and, once the construction work was completed, to take responsibility for maintenance as *Maintenance Champions*. However, due to limited resources, in most cases the contracts could not be continued.

18. Durability of impacts over time

The sustainability of effects over time in relation to the specific measures of the project/programme is closely linked to user care, maintenance and upkeep. The following observations were made in this regard:

User care. Some schools complained about defective well pumps – one school even reported that pupils had injured their fingers. In some places, however, improper use of the infrastructure – in the sense of "play equipment" by the pupils – was observed on site. Proper use in accordance with the operating instructions would have prevented injuries and extended their service life. In addition, the wells are heavily used and provide water not only for the school itself but also for the neighbouring community. In some cases, door anchors had been torn out of the adjacent walls, which should not happen under normal circumstances. In another case, for example, a septic tank in a TTC was used as a rubbish bin.

¹⁹ See here and below: UNICEF Education Budget Brief 2023/24

²⁰ World Bank, Human Capital Public Expenditure Review (2020)

²¹ Regularly performed routines to prevent damage and thus prevent minor defects from leading to major damage later on.

²² Repair of a part of the infrastructure that has been damaged or has lost its functionality.

Many of the schools are located near commercial centres and are affected by vandalism and theft. In many cases, the taps on the water tanks located in front of the teachers' houses and hostels were missing, as were the ventilation pipes of the latrines. Elsewhere, water tanks were relocated because they were not protected from theft at their original location. In one case, the battery of the solar system was stolen.

Maintenance & repair. In terms of infrastructure durability, the school infrastructure supported can be considered low-maintenance. The steel construction has a very long service life, the infill with local material (mud bricks) can be easily repaired, and no technical equipment requiring extensive knowledge of maintenance and repair has been installed.

Some schools showed (minor) signs of deterioration. For example, door locks or ceiling fans were not working, the solar system was defective (despite an existing five-year warranty), taps on the water tanks were leaking, the keys to the door locks could not be found, the gutters (which led to blockages in the taps of the water tanks) and the drain pipes in the latrines had not been cleaned. The walls of the infrastructure (*stabilised soil blocks*) at some TPSs showed signs of initial washout and spalling.

As illustrated above, the 60 TPSs were equipped with an operating and maintenance concept and a maintenance toolkit. While the documentation was still available at some schools, most school representatives were unaware of it. The maintenance toolkit, on the other hand, was still in use at most schools. Regular (preventive) maintenance schedules are not common – instead, SMCs typically conduct site inspections, repairing damage as needed based on the skills required and the available budget. During the renovation work on the three TTCs, high-pressure water jet pipe cleaning equipment was provided for the maintenance of the sewage system. During the visit, it remained unclear whether the equipment was still in use or available.

The maintenance and repair plan developed under the project/programme stipulates that 1% of the construction costs should be budgeted for preventive maintenance and 2% of the construction costs for corrective maintenance each year. For a TPS, this corresponds to a total of USD 9,900 (~ MKW 17,179,089, as of 06/2025) per year. The SIGs are "theoretically" intended to cover the costs, with the amount of funding allocated depending on the number of pupils. The minimum is MKW 800,000 (~ EUR 400, as of 06/2025), which is well below the funds provided for in the maintenance and repair plan. In addition to maintenance and repair costs, SIG funds are also used to cover expenses such as administration and management, teaching and learning materials, training and support for *mother groups*. The interviews conducted confirm that the schools are structurally underfunded and that additional funds would be required to meet their needs. As a result, the funds that can be used for maintenance and repairs are limited. Despite generally scarce resources, the condition of the schools visited varied. In particular, the positive influence of high ownership and good school management was evident in the initiatives taken to remedy deficiencies. Another positive note is that St. Joseph's TTC, for example, employed two technicians who were responsible for the maintenance and operation of the infrastructure. Their knowledge of the infrastructure was exemplary, as was the condition of the infrastructure itself.

Ultimately, it is the interplay of many (contextual) factors that influence the quality of teacher training and, ultimately, that of primary education, as already discussed under effectiveness and impact. Another positive aspect is, for example, the government's planned introduction of degree and diploma programmes for primary school teachers to promote professional development and increase qualifications.

Summary appraisal of sustainability: **moderately successful (3) (for both phases)**

One problem with regard to sustainability is the tight financial situation of the public education system, which limits maintenance and repair measures and is also responsible for the current low absorption rate of IPTE graduates into the teaching profession – despite the country's high educational needs. On the other hand, the ongoing political efforts to achieve an appropriate level of educational quality are very positive. Against this background, sustainability is nevertheless assessed as moderately successful.

Overall rating: **moderately successful (3) (for both phases)**

Improving the quality of primary education remains of great relevance and is one of the declared goals of the Malawian government. Qualified teachers can be of central importance in achieving this goal. In this respect, the FC project/programme supported the government's own efforts by expanding, renovating and furnishing 60 TPSs in line with requirements, as well as renovating the water supply, sewage system and sanitary facilities of the three TTCs associated with the schools in order to improve the conditions for student teachers, particularly during their practical teacher training.

Due to the Malawian government's decision to reduce the number of students nationwide, the funded training capacities at the TPS and TTC level were not fully utilised at the time of the evaluation. However, the majority of the measures benefit not only teacher training students, but also pupils and teachers at the schools, so that the significant improvement in infrastructure has certainly contributed to improving the quality of primary education. The classrooms, sanitary facilities, teachers' houses and administrative buildings were used intensively. In terms of implementation, some potential remained untapped. For example, after the warranty period had expired, the water supply at the Blantyre TTC was inadequate. Defects in the solar systems of many TPSs could also have been repaired under existing warranties. However, there was a lack of knowledge and coordination, so that defects were not reported and warranty claims were not made. For future project/programme, it would be useful to systematically and sustainably embed knowledge about warranty processes among those responsible.

The chosen building design with a steel structure has the advantage of a long service life and is also low-maintenance. This is definitely advantageous due to limited maintenance and repair requirements. However, given the extremely high demand for additional school infrastructure, the question arises as to whether the focus could have been on more cost-effective materials with a stable construction in terms of efficiency.

Rising pupil numbers continue to challenge Malawi's ability to provide high-quality education. The data shows that the level of education remains low. The positive effects of qualified and trained teachers can only materialise if they are recruited into the teaching profession. However, due to the government's tight budget, there are delays in recruiting graduates, which dampens the impact of the project/programme. Nevertheless, the government's efforts in this area are seen as a very positive sign.

Contribution to Agenda 2030

The project contributes directly to SDG 4 – in particular to SDG 4.1, which aims to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary education that is effective and leads to useful learning outcomes.

The measures support a holistic approach to sustainability in social and economic terms, as improving educational attainment helps to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth by increasing productivity. There was no explicit focus on environmental goals.

Overall, the project/programme is consistent with the international community's goal of realising the human right to education by 2030. Education for girls and women improves their social position in the long term and contributes to gender equality.

Methodology

Evaluation methodology

The ex-post evaluation follows the methodology of a rapid appraisal, i.e. a data-based, qualitative contribution analysis, and represents an expert opinion. The project is attributed effects based on plausibility considerations, which are based on a careful analysis of documents, data, facts and impressions. Where possible, this also includes the use of digital data sources and modern techniques (e.g. satellite data, online surveys, geocoding). The causes of any contradictory information are investigated, attempts are made to resolve them, and the assessment is based on statements that are confirmed by several sources of information (triangulation), where possible.

The analysis of the effects is based on assumed causal relationships, documented in the impact matrix developed during the project appraisal and updated during the ex-post evaluation, if necessary. The evaluation report sets out arguments as to why certain influencing factors were identified for the effects observed and why the project under review probably made a certain contribution (contribution analysis). The context of the development measure is taken into account in terms of its influence on the results. The conclusions are put into relation to the availability and quality of the data basis. An evaluation concept serves as the reference framework for the evaluation.

The method offers a balanced cost-benefit ratio for project evaluations, on average, with a balance between knowledge gain and evaluation effort, and allows for a systematic assessment of the effectiveness of DFG projects across all project evaluations. Individual ex-post evaluations cannot therefore meet the requirements of a scientific assessment in the sense of a clear causal analysis.

The main objective of the evaluations (knowledge interest) is to measure impacts, provide accountability, promote transparency and enable institutional learning.

Type of evaluation:

Mission to the project area

Key questions of the evaluation according to the evaluation concept:

- Is the funded infrastructure being used adequately? Does it meet needs?
- Have improvements been made in the quality of practical teacher training? Were there parallel measures that, in addition to supporting a learning-friendly environment, also addressed other quality requirements such as curricula, availability of mentors, and teaching and learning materials? Was the right bottleneck addressed?
- Was it possible to make an overall contribution to improving quality in the field of basic education?
- Did the criteria-based selection of TPSs achieve the greatest possible impact?
- To what extent do the created capacities have sustainability? How should the functionality of the school maintenance system be appraised? Are the construction measures carried out of sufficient quality to achieve a sustainable quantitative improvement in basic education? To what extent can operation and maintenance be covered by the budget available to the schools?
- Could an alternative construction design have increased impact/reduced costs? Did the design serve as a model for subsequent school construction projects?
- What priority is given to the training of primary school teachers within the MoE/government's priorities?
- Is there a financing strategy for the education sector that is sustainable? How high is donor dependency?

Non-public (internal) documents

Internal project documents, secondary literature, strategy papers, context, country and sector analyses,

List of public sources

Asim et al. (2019): Moving teachers to Malawi's remote communities: A data-driven approach to teacher deployment. In: International Journal of Educational Development.

Asim, Salman and Casley Gera, Ravinder (2024): What Matters for Learning in Malawi? Evidence from the Malawi Longitudinal School Survey. International Development in Focus. World Bank

BMZ (2010): Priority Strategy Paper on Basic Education in Malawi.

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Government of Malawi, National Statistical Office (2021): Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

Government of Malawi (2014): Education Sector Implementation Plan II (2013/14 - 2017/18).

Government of Malawi (2020): "Vision Malawi 2063"

Internal documents: KS, PV, BE, PCR, RKV

MoE: National Education Sector Plan, NESP (2008-2017).

MoE: Malawi Education Statistics Reports.

MoE: Education Sector Performance Reports.

MoE (2010): National Norms and Guidelines for Primary School Construction, Rehabilitation and Maintenance in Malawi.

MoE (2020): National Education Sector Investment Plan 2020-2030.

UNICEF Education Budget Brief 2023/24

USAID (2014): Early Grade Reading Assessment

World Bank (2024): Poverty & Equity Brief, Malawi

Data sources and analysis tools

(Digital) databases, on-site data collection, partner monitoring data, GPS data

Project sites visited

- Random sample of TPSs visited:
 - 1. Mkhalanjoka TPS
 - 2. Nthulu TPS
 - 3. Kasinje TPS
 - 4. Bwanje TPS
 - 5. Lirangwe TPS
 - 6. Ntenjera TPS
 - 7. Lunzu TPS
 - 8. Kaphatenga TPS
 - 9. Mitundu TPS
 - 10. Patsankhondo TPS
- TTC Lilongwe, TTC St. Josephs, TTC Blantyre

Interview partner and modality (in person, virtual/by telephone, in writing)

Project executing agency, target group, other donors, KfW employees (responsible for the project), implementation consultant, other partners

The following aspects limited the evaluation

No data is available that would allow the further career development of student teachers to be tracked after graduation.

Assessment methodology

A six-point scale is used to assess the project/programme according to OECD DAC criteria, with the exception of the sustainability criterion. The scale values are as follows:

Level 1 Very successful: results significantly above expectations

Level 2 Successful: results fully in line with expectations, without significant shortcomings

Level 3 Moderately successful: results below expectations, but positive results predominate

Level 4 Moderately unsuccessful: significantly below expectations and negative results dominate despite recognisable positive results

Level 5 Unsuccessful: despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate

Level 6 Highly unsuccessful: the project/programme is useless or the situation has deteriorated

The overall rating on the six-point scale is based on a project-specific rationale for the weighting of the six individual criteria. Levels 1–3 of the overall rating indicate a 'successful' project/programme, while levels 4–6 indicate an 'unsuccessful' project/programme. It should be noted that a project/programme can generally only be classified as 'successful' in terms of development policy if both the achievement of objectives at the outcome level (effectiveness) and impact level, as well as sustainability, are appraised at least as 'limited success' (level 3).

The annex to this report is available upon request (German only).

Imprint

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