

LASER PULSE

Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER)
Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)

MULTI-COUNTRY STUDY ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION (MCSIE)

Malawi Trip Report
July 2023

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About LASER PULSE (Place in Acknowledgements section)

LASER (Long-term Assistance and SErvices for Research) PULSE (Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine) is a \$70M program funded through USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub, that delivers research-driven solutions to field-sourced development challenges in USAID partner countries.

A consortium led by Purdue University, with core partners Catholic Relief Services, Indiana University, Makerere University, and the University of Notre Dame, implements the LASER PULSE program through a growing network of 3,400+ researchers and development practitioners in 84 countries.

LASER PULSE collaborates with USAID missions, bureaus, and independent offices and other local stakeholders to identify research needs for critical development challenges, and funds and strengthens capacity of researcher-practitioner teams to co-design solutions that translate into policy and practice.

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ACRONYMS

CCS	Comparative Case Study
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CoP	Chief of Party
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
DEM	District Education Manager
DIE	Department of Inclusive Education
DP	Development Partners
DQAS	Department of Quality Assurance
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FEDOMA	Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HQ	Headquarters
HT	Head Teacher
IDP	Inclusive Development Partners
IE	Inclusive Education
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
LASER	Long-Term Assistance and Services for Research
LEA	Local Education Authority
MACOHA	Malawi Council for the Handicapped

MANAD	Malawi National Association of the Deaf
MCSIE	Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MUB	Malawi Union of the Blind
NextGen	Next Generation Early Grade Reading Activity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DPO	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
PODCAM	Parents of Disabled Children Association of Malawi
PTA	Parent-Teacher Associations
PULSE	Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine
REFAM	Reading for All Malawi
SIG	School Improvement Grants
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SNE	Special Needs Education
TLM	Teacher Learning Material
ToT	Training of Trainers
TTC	Teacher Training College
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

BACKGROUND

The Multi-Country Study on Inclusive Education (MCSIE) is a four-year, \$3.58 million evaluation of three USAID inclusive education activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal, investigating what works to improve the quality of education for learners with disabilities. The activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal represent the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) most concerted effort to date to build systems to ensure students with disabilities have access to quality education. MCSIE will leverage this unique opportunity to derive lessons learned on what works to advance teaching and learning outcomes sustainably for children with disabilities in varying contexts. USAID and its partners will use this information to inform adaptations to its activities in Cambodia, Malawi, and Nepal and plan for new inclusive education programming globally.

Members of Inclusive Development Partners' (IDP) international team traveled to Malawi in June 2023 to conduct a field visit to validate endline findings from the MCSIE Malawi Endline Report and collect additional data for case studies on inclusive pedagogy and the engagement of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs). One team member traveled to Malawi from June 4 – June 17, 2023, and the other traveled from June 4 – June 21. IDP collaborated with the current USAID/Malawi activity, Next Generation in Early Grade Reading (NextGen) Activity, to complete validation and preliminary findings via the two Inclusive Education Regional and National Inclusive Education Roundtable events hosted.

TRAVEL OBJECTIVES

Overarching Purpose: To validate the findings from MCSIE Malawi Endline Draft Report, disseminate preliminary information on MCSIE findings in collaboration with the USAID-funded Next Generation in Early Grade Reading (NextGen) Activity, and collect additional data with key stakeholders for country-specific and comparative case studies to be completed in the final year of MCSIE.

The main objectives of this trip include:

1. Validation of our understanding of the REFAM activities accomplished between April 2022 and the activity close in August 2022.
2. Presentations of the Malawi Endline Report findings with USAID/Malawi Mission staff, relevant government officials, DPO partners, and other key stakeholders such as development partners or donors.
3. To align validation and dissemination activities with the current USAID-funded activity, NextGen.
4. To collect additional data for country-specific and comparative case study topics, including effective DPO engagement and inclusive pedagogy.

NEXT STEPS

The next steps following this trip include:

- Revision of the MCSIE Malawi Endline Finding Report that will integrate USAID/Washington and USAID/Malawi initial feedback and information from validation meetings.
- As possible, IDP will conduct additional meetings with stakeholders who were unavailable or did not respond to requests for meetings during the validation trip.

- Complete country case studies by Fall 2023 to inform future comparative case studies purposed for MCSIE countries. These case studies will focus on DPO engagement and inclusive pedagogies.
- Continue to liaise with USAID on findings from this visit and their implications for the broader MCSIE evaluation.

MEETINGS / WORK SESSIONS

The table below highlights meetings from June 6 to June 21, 2023. Appendix A provides a summary of the various meetings and contact information.

DATE	PERSONS/ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED	DESCRIPTION
Mon., June 5	N/A	Travel day to northern Malawi for North Region IE Convening
Tues., June 6	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone NextGen: Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beauty Makause, Beatrice Ngoma, Lwitiko Mulwafu	North Region IE Convening
Wed., June 7	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone FEDOMA: Mulanje Phiri FGD SNE Teachers: 3 Females, 5 Males FGD: IE Teachers: 6 Females, 1 Male	Endline and Comparative Case Study Key Informant Interview with FEDOMA. Focus group discussions with special needs education (SNE) teachers who teach in resource centres (focus group 1) and special needs education teachers who split time between resource centres and general education classrooms (focus group 2). FEDOMA, FGD with SNE Teachers and IE Teachers
Thurs., June 8	N/A	Return Travel to Lilongwe
Fri., June 9	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone Lilongwe LEA: Emanuel Magalasi (Head Teacher), Blessings Banda (SNE Teacher)	Endline and Comparative Case Study KIs with Lilongwe LEA Primary School Head Teacher and Special Education Needs. KI with the school head teacher, classroom observation, and

		interview with the SNE teacher (the only one at the school).
Mon., June 12	N/A	Travel to Southern Malawi or South Region IE Convening
Tues., June 13	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone NextGen: Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beatrice Ngoma, Mercy Malina, Multiphallie Bundula, Pacharo Mwase-Vuma	South Region IE Convening
Wed., June 14	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone MUB: Stuart Chauruka PODCAM: Lyness Mandua	Endline and Comparative Case Study Key Informant Interviews with DPO representatives and special needs education teachers.
Thurs., June 15	N/A	Return Travel to Lilongwe
Fri., June 16	IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone GIZ: Ezekiel Kaschisa NextGen: Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula	Meeting with GIZ, Planning with NextGen for national convening
Sat., June 17	N/A - nonworking day	Christopher Johnstone departs
Mon., June 19	IDP: Ashley Stone MANAD: Byson Chimanya APPDM: Charles Khuala DIOWDE: Sigere Kasasi	Endline and Comparative Case Study Key Informant Interviews with DPO Representatives.
Tues., June 20	IDP: Ashley Stone NextGen: Terry Giles, Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beatrice Ngoma, Beauty Makause, Lwtiko Mulwafu, Mercy Malina, Multiphallie Bundula	National IE Roundtable Event
Wed., June 21	IDP: Ashley Stone USAID: Odala Banda, Bryan Dwyer, Emily Route, Dorothy Matiti, Flossie Kamulaga NextGen: Terry Giles	Debriefing meeting with USAID and NextGen

ANNEX A. MEETING DESCRIPTIONS

North Region Inclusive Education Convening

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

NextGen: Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beauty Makause, Beatrice Ngoma, Lwitiko Mulwafu

The North Region Convening was a two-day event organized by NextGen and MCSIE to provide an overview of MCSIE findings and their implications for NextGen activity and to launch activity related to developing inclusive School Improvement Plans (SIPs). NextGen solely facilitated the SIP activity. Day 1 of the convening featured a welcome from Lucy Magagula, Deputy Director of Inclusive Education of the Department of Inclusive Education within Malawi's Ministry of Education. Following welcome remarks by Deputy Director (Inclusive Education) and other honored guests, MCSIE and NextGen staff presented an overview of the current status of the activity. Specifically, facilitators shared key findings from the MCSIE activity and preliminary findings from the NextGen activity. Participants spent the second half of the workshop reviewing findings and discussing implications in district-based groups. In small groups, district-based representatives reflected on the five key findings of 1) inclusion first: a UDL approach, 2) Collaboration and Coordination, 3) resource centre engagement, 4) teacher perspectives and needs and 5) community engagement. These five findings had additional details provided based on the MCSIE findings from across the evaluation questions. Representatives then identified areas of priority for inclusive education in their districts based on the findings presented. Facilitators captured priority areas digitally and will send the information to the participants via a Google document link on WhatsApp.

The gender and stakeholder breakdown for the North Region Inclusive Education Event is as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Female	Male	Total
MOE	57	80	137
Community / Parent	5	1	6
PODCAM	2	1	3
MUB	0	3	3
FEDOMA	0	2	2
District Council Representatives (Mzimba)	0	2	2
Total	64	87	151

KII with the Federation of Disability Organizations in Malawi (FEDOMA)

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

FEDOMA: Malonje Phiri

On Day 2 of the Northern Region convening, IDP members did not participate in plenary sessions. Instead, they pulled key stakeholders for interviews focused on understanding DPO engagement and inclusive pedagogies. The day's first interview was with Malonje Phiri, a program coordinator for FEDOMA. Mr. Phiri provided insights into relationships between FEDOMA and its donors. FEDOMA was not a partner in the MCSIE activity but is the umbrella DPO in Malawi, so its staff has an important perspective on DPO-donor relations. Mr. Phiri reported that FEDOMA has generally had positive relationships with donors. There is a period of discussion before any project, he reported, that helps both donor and DPO understand how each other works. Mr. Phiri viewed different donor expectations as an opportunity to learn and noted that FEDOMA has never canceled a contract (or been removed from one).

FGD I with Special Needs Education Teachers

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

Focus Group I Participants: 3 females, 5 males (names withheld for anonymity)

IDP held a focus group discussion with Special Education Needs (SNE) Teachers, also known as specialist teachers or resource classroom (RC) teachers. Focus Group I had eight participants, three female, and five male. The first focus group participants were SNE teachers who worked primarily in resource centre settings. These centres were almost all attached to general education schools, but one teacher also worked in a special school. SNE teachers confirmed that resource centre classrooms were typically composed of learners with all types of disabilities, with the usual exception being learners from the seven deaf education schools within Malawi. The size of the SNE teacher's classrooms varied, with the smallest class having nine learners and the largest class having 56 learners, covering pre-school to standard eight, with all standards mixed into one classroom. SNE Teachers reported that several factors, including disability diagnosis, feedback from parents, registration and classroom observations, and general education teacher recommendations, determine placement in the resource center classroom. Decisions to place a learner in a general education setting are based on the learner's needs, if the learner's previously observed challenges are addressed or if the learner has academically improved, and if a discussion has occurred amongst school personnel and families. Participants reported that they teach learners specifically in the resource centre classrooms and engage learners from the general education classrooms who participate in pull-out services (come to the resource centre classroom for additional support).

One SNE teacher also reported that their learners participated with general education classroom peers in non-academic classes such as music. When asked about pedagogies that supported inclusive education, teachers could name multiple pedagogies. These included group work, using real objects, peer tutoring, sign language, and remediation. Only one of the teachers in this focus group had previous Universal Design for Learning training. Yet, many identified strategies that could be considered under the broad umbrella of UDL—a significant part of the conversation in this focus group related to identifying learners with disabilities. Three main strategies were reported – screening (used by one

participant), teacher identification (used by all participants), and use of medical records upon enrollment – used by one participant. Focus group participants could only recall two specific instances when a learner began participating in the resource room and successfully returned to the general education environment. In one case, a learner received eye surgery, which improved their vision. In another, a child responded to remediation and moved successfully to a general education classroom.

FGD II with Inclusive Education Teachers

Wednesday, June 9, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

Focus Group 2 Participants: 6 females and 1 male (names withheld for anonymity)

IDP held a focus group discussion with Inclusive Education (IE) teachers; IE teachers share their time between the general education and resource centre classrooms. All Inclusive Education teachers are trained as SNE teachers but said they were assigned as IE teachers through the Ministry of Education. Focus Group 2 had seven total participants, six female, and one male. Two additional males were excused from the focus group because they were itinerant teachers, a population that was interviewed in the second regional convening. The primary purpose of the focus group was to identify inclusive pedagogies that teachers regularly used to support the learning of learners with disabilities. Teachers shared pedagogies such as using chart paper, gestures, sign language, real objects, chaining (i.e., task analysis), curriculum adaptation, and peer learning. Teachers had a firm grasp on the strategies that they found to be most effective and unanimously stated that teacher-centered pedagogies were not effective for learners with disabilities. Teachers also mentioned that "passion" was necessary to advocate for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education systems. For three participants, those passions were spurred by personal relationships with a family member or teacher with a disability.

KII with Lilongwe Primary LEA Head Teacher

Friday, June 9, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

Lilongwe LEA¹: Emanuel Magalasi (Head Teacher)

IDP personnel conducted an informal school visit to Lilongwe Primary LEA to meet with the school's head teacher and resource centre classroom teacher. The head teacher, Mr. Magalasi, of Lilongwe Primary LEA, reported that there were over 1,000 learners in the school, with approximately 22 learners identified as having disabilities. The headteacher also noted that there were likely more students in the general education classrooms with disabilities who were not yet identified. When asked how these students are identified, he responded that teachers would come to the head teacher if they believed there was a problem. The teacher, head teacher, parent, and SNE teacher discuss the situation together. As a result of the discussion, the group will determine placement and support needs for the learner to ensure they can participate to their fullest extent within the school and what support the learners may need at home. A promising practice at this school was that the head teacher took a whole school approach to inclusive education, ensuring all teachers had exposure to inclusive education ideas

¹ LEA stands for local education authority. Schools in Malawi do not spell out local education authority within their name and always refer to it as LEA. To align with the Ministry of Education's practices, only the acronym is used in the school name for this report.

and training. Some of the general education teachers in the school received training from Save the Children, while others were updated through continuous professional development (CPD). Mr. Magalesi implemented a three-level system for teacher readiness. The first level identified when general education teachers needed to get information from SNE teachers to teach children with disabilities effectively. The second level identified when general education teachers could successfully include children with disabilities with minimal support from SNE teachers. Finally, level three general education teachers were those who had so many skills and strategies that they could share ideas with other teachers.

KII with Lilongwe Primary LEA Special Education Needs Teacher

Friday, June 9, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

Lilongwe LEA: Blessings Banda (SNE Teacher)

Ms. Banda teaches in a resource centre classroom at Lilongwe Primary LEA; the classroom has twenty-two (22) learners aged 7 – 26 years, most at standard I level. Fifteen learners (5 female, 10 male) were in attendance on the day of the observation. IDP personnel observed Ms. Banda in her classroom before speaking with her. She began a Chichewa lesson with learners on sounds. The teacher noted that there were learners with a wide range of disabilities in the classroom. Most of them, she said, had "intellectual" disabilities. She noted that one student who is blind was not present. She also pointed out a student who is deaf and did not know sign language. Both Ms. Banda and the student are taking weekend sign language classes. In the lesson, Ms. Banda began by writing Chichewa sound combinations on chart paper; then, she or the students added additional sound combinations to make words. She used different color markers to demonstrate the different sound combinations. Children who participated often did so smiling, and with every correct answer, learners sign clapped (waving hands) and clapped both hands together or snapped. After the formal frontal lesson, the teacher broke the learners into groups and asked them to merge sounds to make words on paper. IDP observed that when learners were struggling, they would help one another, and Ms. Banda walked between the small groups to support learners. Classmates with full hearing attempted to communicate with the learner who was deaf, but nobody in the classroom used standardized signs.

Additionally, IDP observed that transitions from activities took time. Some learners were better able to move around than others, but Ms. Banda did not appear to rush students in transitioning from one activity to the other. She then taught a similar lesson with "b" sounds in English (as she mentioned, so we observers could follow).

After completing the observation, we interviewed Ms. Banda during her break time. Many of her responses resonated with the answers from the focus groups reported above. Ms. Banda described a "passion" for inclusive education that she picked up when teaching at an inclusive education school. She started with a general teacher certificate from a teacher training college (TTC), then returned to Montfort College for further studies in special needs education because of her passion. The teaching strategies Ms. Banda mentioned that were most successful were small group work and bringing real objects into the classroom. Her greatest challenge was the negativity she faced from general education teachers. Ms. Banda explained that some general education teachers considered learners with disabilities "her" children and did not want to take responsibility for these learners' development. However, Ms. Banda did note that there has been a shift towards more acceptance of learners with disabilities amongst

general education teachers and peers since she has spoken to the entire school about the inclusion of learners with disabilities at the morning assembly and that her learners now take their daily break with their peers without disabilities (not something that previously occurred). She shared that she could speak at the morning assembly and change her classroom break time through discussions with the head teacher, who has supported inclusion efforts within the school. When asked what would be most helpful for improving inclusive education outcomes, Ms. Banda said more materials were needed.

South Region Inclusive Education Convening

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone, Christopher Johnstone

NextGen: Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beatrice Ngoma, Mercy Malina, Multiphallie Bundula, Pacharo Mwase-Vuma

The South Region Convening was a two-day event organized by NextGen and MCSIE to provide an overview of MCSIE findings and their implications for NextGen interventions and to launch activities related to developing inclusive School Improvement Plans (SIPs). NextGen solely facilitated the SIP activity. Day I of the convening featured a welcome from Lucy Magagula, Deputy Director for Inclusive Education within the Department of Inclusive Education of MoE. Following welcome remarks by other honored guests, MCSIE and NextGen staff presented an overview of the current status of the activity. Specifically, key findings from the MCSIE activity were shared with audience members and preliminary findings from the NextGen activity. Participants spent the second half of the workshop reviewing findings and discussing implications in district-based groups. In small groups, district-based representatives reflected on the five key findings of 1) inclusion first: a UDL approach, 2) Collaboration and Coordination, 3) resource centre engagement, 4) teacher perspectives and needs and 5) community engagement. These five findings had additional details provided based on the MCSIE findings from across the evaluation questions. Representatives then identified areas of priority for inclusive education in their districts based on the findings presented. Facilitators captured priority areas digitally and will be sent to the participants via a Google document link on WhatsApp.

The second day of the event was spent conducting interviews facilitated by Ashley Stone and Chris Johnstone. Interviews included the Parents of Disabled Children and Association of Malawi (PODCAM), Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB), and a focus group discussion with Headteachers. For specific details, please see the individual paragraphs below. IDP would like to thank USAID/Malawi for their virtual participation in the South Region event.

The gender and stakeholder breakdown for the South Region Inclusive Education Event is as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Female	Male	Total
MOE	53	80	133
Community / Parent	1	4	5
PODCAM	2	1	3
MUB	1	2	3

FEDOMA	0	4	4
District Council Representatives (Thyolo)	1	0	0
Total	58	91	149

KII with the Parents of Disabled Children and Association of Malawi (PODCAM)

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone and Christopher Johnston

PODCAM: Lyness Mandua

During the South Region Inclusive Education Convening Event, IDP met with Lyness Mandua, Executive Director for PODCAM. Ms. Mandua provided insights into REFAM's relationship with PODCAM. She felt the interactions were largely positive and was excited that PODCAM was called to participate in REFAM activities. Through the connection with REFAM, PODCAM was able to extend its reach and now has 29 branch offices that provide coverage throughout the entire country. The increased number of branch offices covering Malawi is significant, as she reports no other DPO has representation in all regions of the country. Her primary feedback was related to having representation on projects so that donor-funded organizations could reflect on the perspectives of persons with disabilities. Ms. Mandua shared an example of how the meeting spaces used during the convenings were physically inaccessible. For example, at the North Regional Convening, while the site had a ramp, and an accessible bathroom, the ramp was a bit too steep, and the accessible bathroom was not near the meeting space and required using the ramp that was too steep. IDP would also note that the South Region Convening, the meeting space assigned for KIIs, had a narrow door that while technical wide enough for a wheelchair to fit through, was still difficult to navigate. Furthermore, the room assigned by the hotel that was deemed accessible for the National Convening event was very far from the entrance, had a step up for participants to be able to access the chairs, or they had to use a ramp and would be sitting in the back far away from other participants. Meeting venues were booked by the NextGen team and were reviewed by team members for accessibility, but these challenges do reveal that persons without disabilities or with different disabilities than participants, may miss critical considerations for accessibility.

KII with Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB)

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone and Christopher Johnstone

MUB: Stuart Chauruka

IDP met with Mr. Stuart Chauruka of MUB during the South Region Inclusive Education Convening Event. Mr. Chauruka described a positive relationship between MUB and REFAM, mainly because MUB gained greater access to Ministry of Education stakeholders. When asked what an ideal relationship between a DPO and a donor organization would be, Mr. Chauruka described a relationship in which

organizations were partners. In such relationships, partners have a transparent understanding of the available resources and can co-plan activities. In the case of REFAM, MUB was asked to conduct training. Mr. Chauruka was unsure if REFAM knew that MUB had a different inclusive education project happening concurrently. Not leveraging existing contacts, projects, and DPO knowledge may have been a missed opportunity for REFAM.

FGD and follow up KII with Head Teachers at South Region Event

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone and Christopher Johnstone

FGD with Head Teachers: 1 female, 4 males (names withheld for anonymity)

KII with Head Teacher: 1 female (name withheld for anonymity)

IDP conducted a focus group discussion with five headteachers of the southern region of Malawi. Two headteachers were placed in special schools and three in general education schools. All learners were placed in resource rooms for the head teachers in general education schools. Still, head teachers acknowledged that when SNE teachers were out, learners would integrate into the general education classrooms. According to these head teachers, awareness-raising activities were the most important way of promoting inclusion. Headteachers spoke of cases that allowed for the sensitization of general education teachers, spreading the message that inclusion is everyone's work at the school. For the special school head teachers (one for learners who are deaf and the other for learners who are deaf-blind), head teachers noted that sign language was the most effective strategy but that teachers were not fluent, and some were not even knowledgeable of Malawian Sign Language (MSL). Following the FGD, IDP met with one female headteacher who was invited to the group discussion but could not attend for logistical reasons. The KII participant is a head teacher of an all-boys general education school in Blantyre. She reported the school has 1,951 learners with sixteen learners with disabilities; there is no resource centre classroom, and all learners are taught in the general education setting. The respondent also talked about a teamwork approach to inclusion and strongly noted that if projects like NextGen want teachers to participate in new interventions, these teachers need incentives.

KII with Machinga Teacher Training College (TTC) Lecturer

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone and Christopher Johnstone

Machinga TTC Lecturer: Patrick Basakolo

IDP met with Mr. Patrick Basakolo, a Machinga Teacher Training College lecturer. Machinga has two programs of interest related to REFAM and NextGen. The first is a general teaching program for primary teachers. According to Mr. Basakolo, this program has little in terms of preparation for inclusive education. However, the program greatly emphasizes learner-centered pedagogies in addition to its general program (for which the Malawi Institute of Education sets the curriculum). In addition, Machinga has an open and distance learning (ODL) program that focuses on expanding general teachers' qualifications to support learners with disabilities. In this program, teachers take one year of general courses related to special needs education (Machinga's term) and then specialize in one area – hearing impairment, vision impairment, or intellectual disability (Mr. Basakolo's term). Students spent a third year doing a practicum experience. The latter program is a pilot collaboration with Montfort College

and will be evaluated in 2024. In a subsequent follow-up with Mr. Basakolo to confirm if Machinga TTC has started the deaf education pilot course that was discussed throughout REFAM, he shared that it has begun and has been integrated into the current pilot related special needs education training for teachers.

KII with GIZ

Friday, June 16, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone and Christopher Johnstone

GIZ: Ezekiel Kaschisa, Project Manager

Mr. Kaschisa discussed GIZ's role in inclusive education in Malawi, both in relation to REFAM and independently. GIZ's significant impact in Malawi has been through a certificate program that the organization developed with Montfort College. The certificate program was for practicing teachers and operated as a hybrid distance and short-term residency program. The program will close in less than five months as Germany's overseas funding is shifting from bilateral to multi-lateral contributions. Mr. Kaschisa also touched on broader institutions that could be relevant to the DPO case study in Malawi and the next steps for NextGen. Two institutions are critical to the development of inclusive education in Malawi. The first is the Ministry of Education Inclusive Education Technical Working Group. GIZ was part of this and attributed its functioning entirely to the Ministry of Education. This group brings together a variety of stakeholders and is an access point for policy advocacy for DPOs. The second institution is the Development Partners (DP) Group. This group has no representation from Malawi's government, nor is there much in terms of Malawian organizations. Mr. Kaschisa mentioned an umbrella representative for civil society organizations at the DP group. Still, specific organizations would need to access information sharing and retrieval through the umbrella group rather than accessing the DP directly.

KII with Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD)

Monday, June 19, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone

MANAD: Byson Chimanya, Executive Director

IDP met with MANAD Executive Director Mr. Byson Chimanya with the support of his interpreter. Mr. Chimanya shared that MANAD benefitted from participating as a partner in the REFAM activity. It helped their organization become more known and strengthened their relationships with stakeholders throughout the activity. He reported that since the close of REFAM, other stakeholders have been coming to MANAD to request advice and support related to Malawian Sign Language (MSL) and deaf education. Mr. Chimanya understood REFAM to be designed to support learners who are blind or with low vision primarily, but that REFAM had to call in MANAD to support the human and technical resources needed to support learners who are deaf or hard of hearing. He reported that MANAD's initial responsibility was to provide facilitators for REFAM training and to support the adapted early grade reading assessment (EGRA); however, that over time they were able to strengthen their engagement with the REFAM activity with advocacy work and teaching and learning material development. Mr. Chimanya did report that not having a budget to conduct activities resulted in the organization needing to leverage existing resources which was challenging, but that they found a way to

make it work because the work being done under the REFAM activity was crucial in moving education for deaf learners and MSL forward in the country.

KII with Association of Persons with Physical Disabilities Malawi (APPDM)

Monday, June 19, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone

APPDM: Charles Khaula, Executive Director

IDP met with APPDM Executive Director Mr. Charles Khaula to discuss DPO engagement within donor-funded activities. APPDM is a small DPO supporting persons with physical disabilities with three staff members and support from volunteers. APPDM was neither a partner in the REFAM activity nor a partner in the NextGen activity; however, their organization is working within the education sector. Mr. Khaula shared that APPDM receives support from Disability Rights Fund for their activities but not from donor entities. Mr. Khaula shared that before this year, the organization did not have audited funds; thus, they had difficulty receiving donor awards and funds. The organization's current work within the education sector is to assess the infrastructure accessibility of primary schools in two districts in the southern region. Through this work, the organization collaborates with school administrators, teachers, and parents to identify why learners with disabilities are not attending school and advocate for the attendance and inclusion of learners with disabilities within schools. Under the current project, the organization is also collaborating with school administrators to identify what resources are needed to make schools more inclusive for learners with disabilities and how those needs can be written into SIPs and realized through using School Improvement Grants (SIGs) to improve accessibility. Mr. Khaula also shared that the organization has participated in conversations related to the inclusive education policy that is currently being finalized. These activities highlight synergies between the organization's work and activities undertaken by the NextGen opportunity. It is recommended that these two initiatives share information to inform their future work. Additionally, APPDM shared that the funding for their current activity will end in 2024, and at this time, they have not secured new or additional funding to continue their work. Mr. Khaula shared they are seeking additional or new funding; however, donors typically fund the Malawi DPO umbrella organization FEDOMA or the parent organization, PODCAM, which limits the resources available for their organization.

KII with Disabled Women in Development (DIWODE)

Monday, June 19, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone

DIWODE: Sigere Kasasi, Executive Director

IDP met with DIWODE Executive Director Ms. Sigere Kasasi. IDP met with Ms. Kasasi to discuss DPO engagement within donor-funded activities. DIWODE is a DPO, primarily supported by volunteers and a small staff that focuses on women with disabilities within development interventions, planning, advocacy. DIWODE was neither a partner within the REFAM activity nor a partner in the NextGen activity. During the meeting, Ms. Kasasi had something come up and had to end the meeting early. A follow-up

virtual meeting was attempted on two occasions, however due connectivity issues, the meeting could not be completed. IDP is in ongoing communication with DIWODE to reschedule and complete the interview to support the MCSIE DPO engagement case study.

National Inclusive Education Roundtable

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone

NextGen: Terry Giles, Brent Elder, Augustine Kanyendula, Beatrice Ngoma, Beauty Makause, Lwtiko Mulwafu, Mercy Malina, Multiphally Bundula

The National Inclusive Education (IE) Roundtable was a one-day event organized by NextGen and MCSIE and was held in Lilongwe, Malawi, on June 20, 2023. The event's purpose was two-fold; 1) to further validate the MCSIE Malawi evaluation findings and 2) to unite the ideas from the North and South Region IE events to ensure a presentation of a cohesive message at the future National IE Convening event. The activity coordinated for June 20 was initially the National IE Convening; however, the structure and size of the event changed at the request of the MOE's Department of Inclusive Education to ensure cohesion between the two regions before the information is presented to a group of national stakeholders. During the National IE Roundtable, facilitators presented the findings from the MCSIE evaluation and NextGen REFAM Study, followed by a brief summary of how each findings was contextualized and applied through activities conducted at the North and South Region IE events. Guiding questions for participants facilitated further discussion on the applications shared to help inform the next steps of the NextGen activity as it related to the National IE Convening. Participants confirmed the priorities of the findings, shared valuable feedback related to the findings, and discussed the application of the findings in future work for NextGen activities and within their work. IDP would like to thank the NextGen team members, including the Chief of Party, Mr. Terry Giles, for their collaboration in this and the regional events. Furthermore, IDP would like to thank Mr. Odala Banda from USAID/Malawi for participating in the National IE Roundtable.

The gender and stakeholder breakdown for the National Inclusive Education Roundtable is as follows:

Stakeholder Group	Female	Male	Total
MOE	5	15	20
Community / Parent	0	2	2
PODCAM	2	1	3
MUB	0	3	3
FEDOMA	0	2	2
District Council Representative (Thyolo)	0	1	1

Total	7	24	31
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Out brief with USAID Malawi

Wednesday, June 21, 2023

IDP: Ashley Stone

USAID: Odala Banda, Bryan Dwyer, Emily Route, Dorothy Matiti, Flossie Kamulaga

NextGen: Terry Giles, Augustine Kanyendula

IDP met virtually with USAID and NextGen representatives for an out-brief meeting on June 21. IDP gave an overview of the regional events, national roundtable, and meetings conducted in the country. IDP clarified information that was validated through the IE events and meetings, as well as information that was still unclear and would require additional follow-up with stakeholders. For example, after validation meetings, there are conflicting reports on the current status of the MSL pilot at Machinga TTC, a pilot intervention that REFAM advocated for. Additionally, clarity is needed on the preferred terminology to be used for teachers who teach in a resource centre classroom, and if itinerate teachers are still receiving different training, or if it is just a designation given by the government when assigning teachers to their positions. The group also discussed how the MCSIE Malawi Endline Report findings and lessons learned from the event could help inform NextGen activities related to inclusion. Furthermore, IDP communicated that they would share any recommendations from report revisions with USAID/Malawi and NextGen. IDP and USAID/Malawi also discussed the next steps for finalizing the endline report, including gathering feedback from USAID/Washington and USAID/Malawi to incorporate into the revisions of the report.