

4.2.7.2 GABLE Policy, Planning and Curriculum Project (GABLE PPC)

One major constraint identified during the implementation of the GABLE programs was the need for improved efficiency of the primary school system through improved capacity in the MOESC in planning and policy analysis. USAID Malawi consequently entered into a three year contract with Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII) to implement GABLE PPC effective December 1995. Since January 1999, PPC was extended on no cost basis. This project was designed to provide both long-term and short term technical assistance to the MOESC for the purpose of strengthening capacity in policy, planning and curriculum development. One of the major activities was the development of the education policy investment framework (PIF) re-emphasizing GABLE as a sector reform program.

4.2.7.3 SCF Quality Education Through Supporting Teaching (QUEST)

In 1998, SCF began expanding its Mangochi Village Based Schools through QUEST project. The target of QUEST is the building of the skills of government partners at district, zone, cluster and school levels, while working within the districts of Mangochi, Balaka, and Blantyre rural. It is hoped that lessons from VBS will contribute to the work of district education offices to institute a decentralised approach to enhancing educational quality. This effort will establish new schools where needed and ignite two cycles of quality enhancement—one through teachers and another through communities. Information gained from action research is expected to feed into the development process of the education sector. Obviously, the contribution to be made to such efforts through the under taking of school mapping and micro-planning can not be over-emphasised. This grant is to run until September 30, 2001.

4.2.7.4 Improving Educational Quality (IEQ)

IEQ is a USAID/Washington Global Bureau activity. It is funded by USAID and implemented through a consortium led by the American Institute for Research. The objective of this activity is to build capacity and strengthen institutional capacity to design, manage and utilize action research to inform local and national policy and practice leading to quality basic education. The counterpart institution is the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE). IEQ is supporting the GABLE program on issues of educational quality and efficiency. Thus, IEQ assists the MOESC with the promotion of quality primary education through research at the classroom, school and community levels including, assessment of students learning, classroom observations, the analysis of school and out of school factors related to participation and learning and the relation between educational costs and school effectiveness.

4.2.8 World Bank

The world Bank is probably the longest supporting institution to education in Malawi. Its assistance to education dates back to 1967 when the first education project was signed for the purpose of vocationalising secondary education among others. Over the years, the World Bank has assisted in

many areas including the construction of demonstration schools in each district, restructuring of examinations just to mention a few. It also instituted a project Implementation Unit (PIU) in Blantyre. In recent times, a similar institution has been set up —the Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) which is specifically entrusted with the responsibility of implementing World Bank projects. Since FPE, the Ban has financed the construction of 2,200 classrooms nationwide. The bank has also financed the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF); a social fund which has helped Malawian communities to construct 987 community schools. Under MASAF, communities are supposed to contribute 20% of the costs of a project in kind.

Other activities include the training of school level management and teacher support at the secondary level. In a bid to improve the quality and efficiency of the secondary school education system, the program is training 40 methods advisors, 100 deputy headteachers, 450 heads of department and 10 new headteachers. It is also expected that some five places are to be reserved for private school heads who will be expected to support teachers in the classroom.

4.2.9 World Food Program (WFP)

The world Food Program has piloted a nutrition pilot program in Dedza district. This is a pilot phase and the aim is the provision of school feeding for the improvement of girls' education and attendance in Mtakataka and Golomoti areas in Dedza district. Children in 23 schools are fed at the school with Likuni phala. Girls in standards 5-8 are being given a take home ration. To encourage attendance, these girls are being given maize and tinned fish if they attend 18 or more days in a month. Discussions with the Central East personnel during the JICA Contact Mission revealed that the program is having a positive impact on the schooling of pupils in the area. However, it is very doubtful if such a program could be sustained on a nation wide scale.

According to a recent evaluation report (Kamlongera 1999), the main achievement of the project to date has been in increased enrollment of pupils by 25% and stabilised attendance in the project areas. In particular, the project has helped increase total enrollment of girls between 1998 and 1999 in Mtakataka and Golomoti areas. Further, despite an initial resistance by the communities, the project has brought to the areas increased recognition of the importance of school development vis a vis community participation. This is indeed in addition to improved food security (as girls take food home) and the provision of vitamin enriched porridge at school.

However, the evaluation report pointed out a number of constraints. First, the project has been beset with the usual problems of lack of TL materials and limited number of qualified teachers. Lack of proper guidelines on the implementation of the feeding program and an overall lack of sensitization

about the expectations of the project and its intended results, initially jeopardized the progress of the project. It was also pointed out that although the project enlisted the assistance of the communities, planners and implementers (teachers), did not properly understand and explore ways of how to successfully use community participation. In order to make maximum gains from the project and improve the relationships between the community and the school, both the parents Teacher Association and school committees needed to have been active.

The present initiative whereby various donors in one country are working together with the co-ordination of the ministry can be said to be unique. However, while such effort are commended, my initial experience in the few days has indicated that such arrangements can be explosive and require high degrees of patience which is hard to come by in some donors.

5.0 THE PILOT STUDY IN CHIRADZULU

In 1999, the Planning Section of the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture decided to undertake a pilot school mapping and micro-planning exercise in a single district of Malawi. The district chosen was Chiradzulu in the Southern Region. It was argued that Chiradzulu was chosen because it is a district where there is little donor activity. It is a very populous district with a wide spectrum of communities ranging from urban on the outskirts of Blantyre City, to the remote rural. logistical considerations such as the size of the district and the relative ease of access also added weight to the arguments to choose Chiradzulu district. The expected outcome from this exercise was the capture of data and information on every school, with the aim of being able to engage in meaningful micro-planning at district and zonal levels. Partners with MOESC in this exercise were DANIDA, USAID, CIDA, NORAD, and DFID- both from its central fund and through the Community Schools Program. The main activities of the Chiradzulu pilot and the lessons learnt from it are briefly outlined below.

5.1. Main activities

The exercise dealt with the mapping of existing schools within the district, and providing platform in Geographical Information Systems (GIS), for sector comparisons. Specifically, the Chiradzulu pilot performed the following tasks:

- a) Collection of school coordinates
- b) Establishing and coordination of other sector data sets;
- c) GIS ArcView software development, testing, installation and training;
- d) Collection of additional data considered by the partners to be valuable, especially in relation to infrastructure
- e) Verification of the 1998 school census data as a way of assessing accuracy
- f) Providing the MOESC with the experience in the methodology and implementation of

school mapping and provide a platform for an expanded national effort.

The data were collected in the month of July 1999 by the consultant TPT. All schools in Chiradzulu were visited, assessing the physical status of school infrastructure and carrying out physical count of pupils. In summary, the activities were: collection of data, verification of this data, building analysis and interpretation of results. It was reported that throughout the exercise, district personnel (DEO and PEAs) were involved and trained in data collection methods as part of the capacity building strategy within the school mapping and micro-planning project. But other people have expressed doubts as to whether there was any capacity building since TPT and others did all the work by themselves and that the Chiradzulu personnel only acted as bag carriers .

5.2. Lessons from the Results

It is not the intention of this report to detail the results of the Chiradzulu pilot study. The report merely synthesises these results and highlights the main lessons derived from the synthesis. These lessons are then to guide in the implementation of the nation-wide school mapping and micro-planning exercise. The following is a brief summary of the main lessons from the Chiradzulu pilot study:

- 1) On the positive side, the Chiradzulu pilot has highlighted how school mapping and micro-planning can be used to make informed decisions about schools at the local level. In the words of the Divisional Manager for Central West⁶, the results of the exercise have made a number of revelations. The results have brought to light the usefulness of basing decision on data and this is what we want if we are to be able to say with confidence and determine relevant needs for our districts . Indeed, as a result of the results of the pilot, TPT in collaboration with the district personnel, were able to prioritize and list schools with urgent needs. Thus, the evidence showed that school mapping and micro-planning can provide the mechanisms for the institutionalization of change from the grassroots. It was also reported that as a result of the pilot school mapping and micro-planning, British Council was able to change their strategy in their assistance to Chiradzulu district. This is also evidence that school mapping and micro-planning can identify problems and the actions needed to solve these problems.
- 2) In his remark, the divisional manager for central West division observed that the division personnel were startled by the degree of divergence between the data provided by PEAs for Chiradzulu and that from the results of the pilot. In general, the pilot has demonstrated the poor record keeping in schools. The locus of data accuracy problem is at the school level- the headteachers failure to accurately record and report data. Quality of record keeping is a fundamental area that the ministry and the district offices should address (MOESC, 1999:9).

⁶ He was the divisional manager for South West. when Chiradzulu pilot was done.

This suggests that any serious attempt to providing accurate national data systems must hinge more on the incentives and training available at the school level. It is understood that the main cause of the problem is the lack of understanding by teachers of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was reported to be confusing and complex and the results of the pilot study had enabled the questionnaire to be revised. It was therefore expected that the 1999 census would be a little more accurate since the complexity and confusion in the questionnaire were reduced.

- 3) The most disturbing information to emerge from the analysis was the relation between enrollment records and the actual attendance by pupils. While ten percent of the data showed attendance exceeding enrollment, the data also showed that generally, actual attendance fell far short of the enrolled figures⁷. For example, a calculation of pupil teacher ratio based on enrollment yielded a ratio of 58:1 but this reduced to 38:1 when based on actual attendance. These pieces of information indicate that record keeping is not accorded the priority it deserves in our schools. The problem is that in Malawi, at present, emphasis is on the compilation of data at national level. But the best way to truly provide for EFA requires analysis to be made at the lowest level possible (the school). Questions about educational quality can not be answered properly in the absence of systematic information on what is happening in schools and why. The evidence showed a lack of appreciation of the importance of such pieces of information by both the schools personnel and the higher authorities. Elsewhere, Chimombo (1999) observed that this is because these data are not used in the everyday activities of the teachers and higher authorities. This results in a general lack of accountability in the collection of the various pieces of data. The impression was gained that teachers filled them as one of the many routine activities which were of little importance since the PEAs very rarely checked or reviewed these registers nor were they sent anywhere else to be checked.
- 4) The Chiradzulu pilot has portrayed a picture of a district with diverse and complex educational challenges. In addition to the poor physical condition of the schools and the limited resources, there are considerable socio-economic and cultural barriers to school attainment in Malawi. This means that there is no one explanation for the problems of FPE for the whole of Malawi. In different regions of the country, the sources of income that children can bring to households to complement the main sources of support vary substantially. Therefore, in addition to regional cultural differences, perceived returns to education as well as the opportunity costs of sending children to school in the different regions also vary considerably (Castrol-Leal 1996:33). The implication for this is that strategies devised to curb these problems of schooling cannot be the same. Here the problem of implementation is one of diversity and the challenge to planners in

⁷ The consultant is very worry about the way these comparisons were made. It is possible that data of different years and hence different classes were being compared.

Malawi is how to encompass the varied perspectives. School mapping and micro-planning has a great role to play in this endeavor.

- 5) It is generally being recognized from the Chiradzulu pilot that school mapping is essential but enormously complicated especially if the national mapping is to be done in the same manner as the Chiradzulu pilot. It will require a lot of people and a long-term commitment from the ministry to fund such an intervention. Such a massive exercise definitely also requires some degree of commitment that the data and hence information generated will be used. Chiradzulu has set the pace but some people still think that there is the need for some people to be convinced that this is the most efficient way of attempting to equitably provide resources. The question that still lingers in the minds of many is then: to what extent can school mapping be done at the national level following the Chiradzulu pilot- where there is a TDC in every zone and where there is a PEA house in every zone which may not be the case in other districts? It is however being recognised that capacity is available in Malawi but that what is needed is the determination of who does what at the various levels. The general consensus is that capacity exists and that what is needed is to re-orient or sensitise the people towards education. For example, there are district development officers, PEAs, DEOs, at the district level and there are people like Community Development Officers at the community level who can be mobilised. However, while it is generally believed that PEAs should be at the centre of the school mapping exercise, there is another school of thought which thinks that PEAs are not data collectors and should not be data collectors. This group of people thinks that PEAs should only be channels of communication and delivery of services otherwise they get overburdened and they will therefore get fed up and will end up making up numbers. There is also some feeling among the donor community that there is no capacity in Malawi to conduct the training, but it is not clear what capacity/training this is.

Chiradzulu pilot should be commended for making a step forwards in an attempt to provide relevant pieces of information at the lowest level possible. In particular, the pilot produced beautiful and accurate maps that were useful in locating of schools within districts. In addition, the pilot performed a detailed analysis of the building situation in Chiradzulu. It was possible for the British Council, using this information, to readjust their focus and prioritise their assistance in the district. However, the analysis did not come out candidly in terms of availability of other resources such as textbooks, teachers' guides and syllabi, staff disposition just to mention a few. For example, information on teachers was only available in terms of numbers (how many teachers). But it is important to analyse such information in terms of function, by length of a teacher's general education, length and type of profession training, by in-service courses, experience and gender. These are areas that will need to be improved in the main school mapping and micro-planning exercises and these are the areas where TPT

could be said not to have done a good job.

6.0 AVAILABILITY, CAPABILITY AND FEES OF LOCAL CONSULTANTS

In this section, attempt is made to outline the availability, capability and fees of local consultants who can help in the implementation of the school mapping and micro-planning exercises. Here, the emphasis has been on these people or group of people in the field of education and in particular those with some skills in the field of educational planning. First a table is presented that summarises the local consultants.

Name of Institution/ Individual	Personnel	Qualifications	Rates
CERT Box 280, Zomba Tel. (265) 524 490, or 524 222	Mr M.P. Chibwana Dr J.P.G. Chimombo Ms E.C. Kadzamira Mr D. Kunje	B. Soc. Sc., MA International Ed. B.Soc. Sc., M.Ed, Dphil Education And Development B. Soc. Sc., MA B.Ed, M.Ed.	Profesional fees at \$250 per day plus K2,700 per day subsistence and transport, stationary - no accommodation needed
Malawi Institute of Education P.O Box 50 Domasi. Tel. (265) 536 300	Mr W. Chauluka Mr P.S. Mzumara Mr P.J. Khomani Mr D.R. Jere Dr D. Nyirenda Mr E. Kaphesi	MFA Arts Ed. &Graphics M.Ed Education Admin. M.Ed Curriculum Studies M.Ed Education Measurement PhD urriculum development M.Ed education Management	Profesional fees at \$150 per day plus K1,000 per day subsistence and transport, stationary - accommodation to be provided.
Centre for Social Research P.O.Box 278 Zomba. Tel. (265) 526 622	Dr S. Khaila Dr W. Chilowa Mr T. Bisika. Mr S. Konyani Mr J Milner Mr P. Mvula Mr M. soka	PhD Agriculture PhD Development MA Msc. MA. MPS MA	Profesional fees at \$250 per day plus K2,700 per day subsistence and transport, stationary - no accommodation needed
Malawi National Examinations Board Box 191 Zomba. Te. (265) 525 277	Mr J.S. Mwanza Mr Khembo		Profesional fees at \$150 per day plus K2,300 per day subsistence and transport, stationary - no accommodation needed
Chancellor College (Faculty of Education) Box 280, Zomba Tel (265) 524 222	Dr A Zoani Dr F. Msiska Mr O. Kathamalo Dr D. Maluwa		Negotiable

Chancellor College (Free Lance Group) Box 280, Zomba Tel (265) 524 222	Dr L. Binauli Mrs Lucy Chipeta Dr Patrick Kambewa Mrs Estery Kunkwenzu Dr M. Mbilizi	Family Resource Management Regional Planning Agricultural Economics Home Economics Education Education.	Profesional fees at \$250 per day plus K1,800 per day subsistence and transport, stationary - no accommodation needed
TPT			\$450 per day per person

It must be pointed out that school mapping and micro-planning are technical areas and as such the expertise to implement the projects are to be found in educational related institutions. In the main, the best experts in the field of educational planning ought to be found in the planning division of the ministry of education sports and culture. If it were argued that the planning unit does not posses the required skills, then this would be an unfortunate situation, which should urgently be addressed. If school mapping and micro-planning are to be institutionalised in the MOESC, it is imperative that the various personnel at the various levels are imparted with these skillls. And this can only be done if they are made to practically do the exercise themselves. The planning unit is to be complemented by the various educational institutions as follows.

CERT- this institution encompasses a wide range of expertise ranging from educational planning to statistical analysis, to testing and measurement to curriculum and teacher education issues. It is important that the various methods and procedures for collecting data are identified, the instruments are critically analysed and contextualised. With their massive expertise in the design of surveys and their execution, this is the area where CERT could significantly and positively contribute. Further, one of the major weaknesses of the MOESC (in particular, planning unit) is the low level of analytical skills. School mapping and micro-planning entail the collection of massive amounts of data and hence a great deal of analysis and interpretation. This is an area where CERT could play a role in these exercises. While TPT is commended for work done in Chiradzulu, the consultant fears that TPT uses people who are not wholly educationists and this may result in fundamental errors of basic interpretation.

MIE- As curriculum developers, MIE will be useful in instructional design, especially in specifying the learning objectives for the training modules and the specification of the means for assessing the learning outcomes. Other institutions with other expertise could be incorporated. MIE will also take a lead in desk top publishing to ensure quality presentation of the print based modules. They could also be encouraged to consult other publishing companies if necessary.

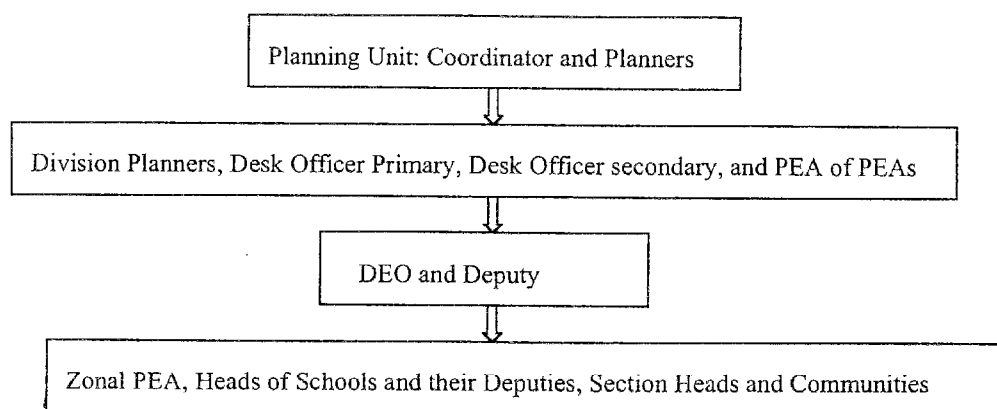
MANEB- Issues of assessment testing and measurement will inevitably crop up in school mapping and micro-planning. This is where the expertise of MANEB will be useful.

CSR- School mapping and micro-planning will undoubtedly unveil the diversity of the environments in which problems of schooling are occurring. If education is to be tailored to the specific needs of the communities in which the school operates, there is need for some socio-economic analysis of the environments in which the school is located. Where necessary, the expertise of CSR could be tapped for this purpose.

It should of-course be mentioned that there are other institution like the Mzuzu University, the Polytechnic where specific skills could also be tapped. It should also be pointed out that TPT did a tremendous job with the GISs and they will definitely take a leading role in the production of maps.

6.1 Who Does What?

The overall philosophy within the school mapping and micro-planning exercises is that of providing the MOESC with valid and accurate data. This philosophy is grounded in the institutionalization of a capacity within the ministry so that school mapping becomes the everyday work of the ministry personnel. As noted above, this capacity building cuts across the whole system right from the planning unit to the school level. The following figure indicates the personnel involved in the whole school mapping and micro-planning exercise.



Specifically, the capacity building within the JICA micro-planning component is detailed in the table below.

Level	Number of Organisations	Target Audience	Roles and Areas to be Strengthened
Community		Area/Village development Committees Community leaders, Religious leaders And Counsellors	Sensitisation to educational Micro-planning

School	4,000 800	Primary school Headteachers Secondary School Headteachers Parents Teachers Association School Committees	Record Collection and Management Use of collected data for diagnosing educational needs and prioritising them
Zone/Cluster	315	Zonal Officers (Primary Education Advisers) Teacher Development Centres	Use of school mapping data to micro-plans for primary education.
District	33	District Development Committees District Education Officers Assistant District Education Officers Typists/Secretaries	Interpretation of school mapping Data Maintenance and use of school Mapping Micro-planning including priority Setting for the improvement of access Equity and quality. Word processing
Division	6	Division Managers, Deputy Division managers Education Methods Advisors Division Planners Desk Officers for Primary and Secondary and higher education Statistical Clerks	Conversion of Ministry strategic Plans into division operational plans
Ministry	1	Staff in Planning Division	Integrating school mapping and Micro planning data with the EMIS

Note: adopted from the minutes of meeting of 10th April, 2000.

The table points out to the fact that since the focus in school mapping and micro-planning is on capacity building of the local personnel in the education sector, it is important to clarify the roles of each party in the education sectors right from the top to the bottom. But it is also important to say that the focus in school mapping and in particular micro-planning will have to be at the school level. While the PEAs and the DEOs and deputy DEOs have the overall responsibility of consolidating and synthesizing the district information, this synthesis is only possible if the correct data is collected. Thus, while JICA's focus is on micro-planning, it must be emphasized that the first step at the school level is to make sure that an appropriate system for collecting the data is in place. There is the immediate need to review the existing arrangements for the identification, collection, processing and analysis of data as they affect pupils and teachers' issues in Malawi. The locus of data accuracy problems is at the school level - the headteachers' failure to accurately record and report data. This suggests that any serious attention to improving national data systems must hinge more on improving the incentives and training available at the

school level than in providing more analytic or interpretative power at the national level. Problems of data accuracy cannot be resolved by more or better use of computers, as is currently the tendency in the MoE in Malawi. It is high time the MoE gave more attention to school level factors in the collection and reporting of the basic data that serve as inputs to the system. The cost of the improvements needed, needs to be balanced against the potential cost of basing decisions on inaccurate data of some 10% or greater margins of error, as is indicated in Chimombo (1999).

The next step will then be to make sure that the school personnel are able to reflect upon the data, and be informed by them. They will have to be able to interpret the information for their schools in terms of what they mean for an effective school and the implications for teaching and learning. It is only through this that we can derive any usefulness from the school mapping and micro-planning exercises. All the above entail a participatory approach to the school mapping and micro-planning. The various parties will also have to be sensitized to win their confidence and stimulate their volunteering of information.

7.0 AN OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL MAPPING AND MICRO-PLANNING

This section is intended to provide a common understanding of the basic concepts of school mapping and micro-planning. The section merely defines the basic issues to give a common floor of operation in these exercises. The JICA contact mission study was undertaken within the framework of the national school mapping and micro-planning which is to be implemented by MOESC in collaboration with other co-operating partners. The terms school mapping and micro-planning have been used in this write up to mean the following:

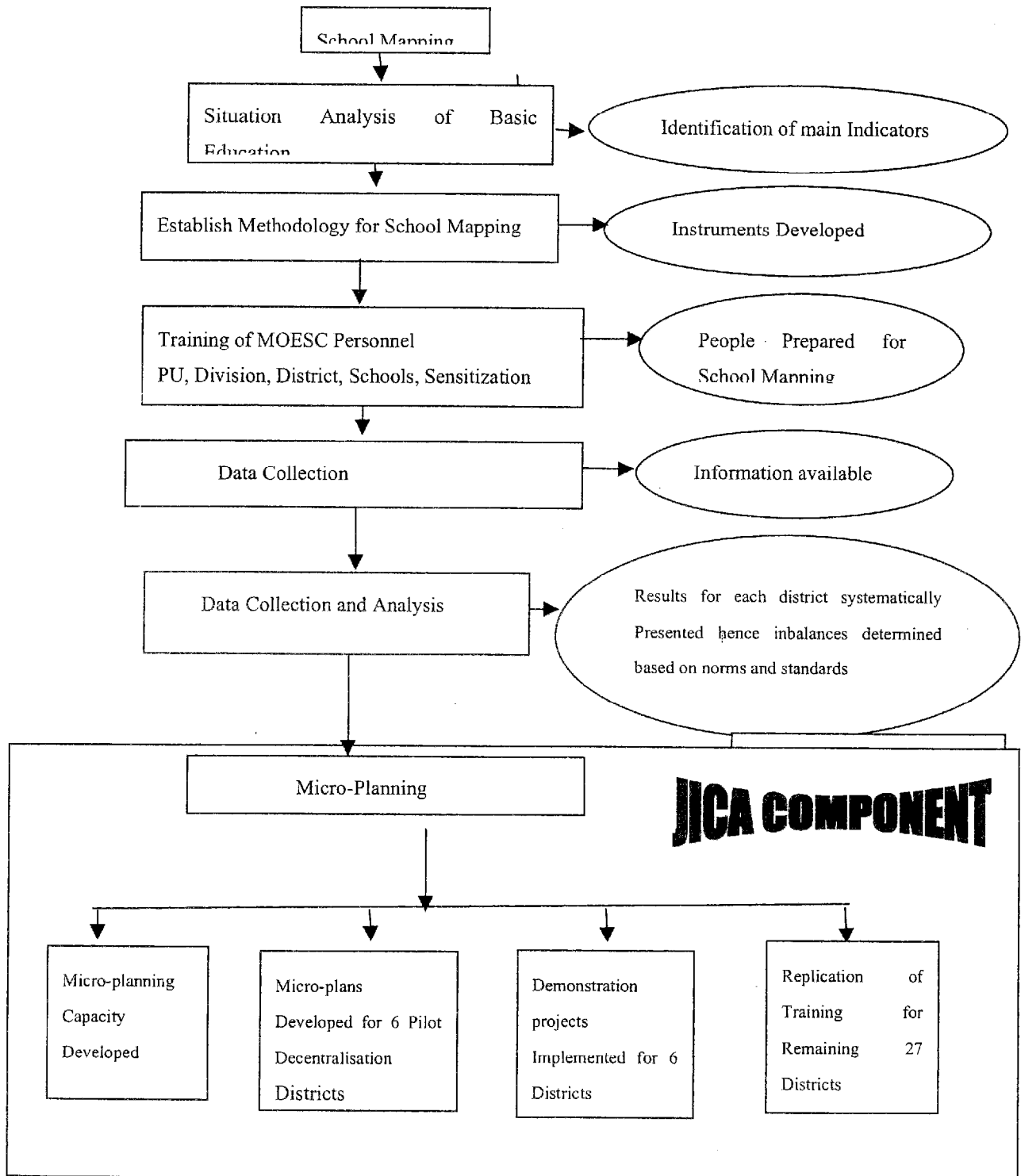
School mapping —is a set of techniques and procedures used to identify future needs in education at the local level and to plan for measures to be taken to meet them. School mapping is more than mere marking on a large-scale map the location of existing schools, distinguished by appropriate symbols. This exercise while very useful is nevertheless a first step in preparing a school map. The school map should be much more than this. It is a forward-looking and dynamic vision of what the educational services, with their premises, teachers, and equipment should be in the future so as to enable educational policy to be implemented as this is central to the FIP if it is to be a living document.

Preparation of school mapping at the local level comprises three stages: an in-depth diagnosis of the situation in the base year, projections of the numbers to be enrolled in the light of national policy objectives and proposals for re-organisation of the educational services. In short school mapping is a method of planning education at the local level.

Micro-planning - In its widest sense, educational micro-planning covers all planning activities at the sub-national level, be it regional, or local. It is planning at the local levels while using macro-planning concepts but allowing participation of local actors. Micro-planning reflects a real concern to improve the functioning of the educational system by reinforcing regional and local planning activities. Micro-planning ensures greater equality in the distribution of educational services.

The following diagram gives a summarises the conceptualisation of the school mapping and micro-planning exercises.

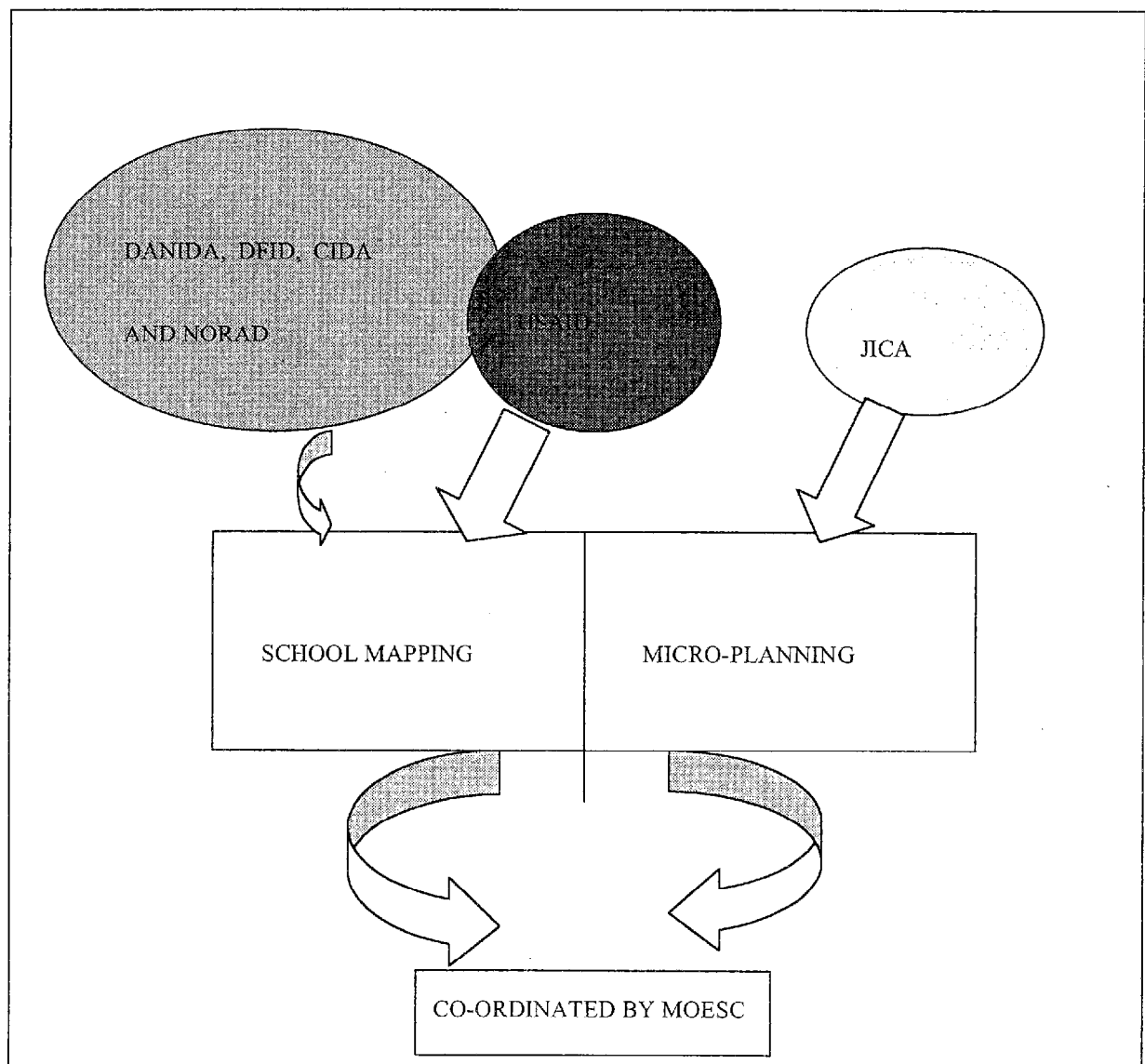
Figure 6 School Mapping and Micro-planning Processes



As stated, this structure merely outlines the processes in the two exercises. It should be acknowledged

that in Malawi, there has evolved a unique setting where various donors have come together in collaboration under the overall co-ordination of the MOESC. This is an encouraging development which by all means should be encouraged and sustained. The donors in question are: **DFID, NORAG, USAID, JICA, CIDA, and DANIDA**. The nature of their support towards the school mapping and micro-planning exercises is such that they all but two put their money in one basket. The other two, JICA and USAID are not allowed to co-mingle their funds. Instead they will pick specific items in the projects for their support. This funding approach can be presented diagrammatically as follows:

Figure 5 Financial Support Settings for School Mapping and Micro-Planning



As observed already, the donor co-operation is co-ordinated by the MOESC. Thus, while the financial resources are coming from the various donors, the implementation and co-ordination of the whole project rests in the hands of the ministry. The school mapping and micro-planning exercises were initiated by the MOESC and therefore MOESC is the driver of these exercises.

8.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, we note the while the new government of Malawi has attempted to address issues of access, the basic education sector continues to be beset by numerous problems. Inequality, particularly by gender and region, persists and problems of quality seem to have been aggravated. Dropout and repetition continue to be significant problems and despite the introduction of FPE and the many attempts at reform, Malawi is not able to get all the school age children in school. The challenges that Malawi now faces mean that a cure for all approach to our problems will not work. First it requires a comprehensive and holistic approach to bring education of high quality to our children. The central point in this shift should be the creation of a learning environment where each child is given the opportunity to learn in an optimal manner. This requires the collaboration of the various actors in the schooling endeavor such as that of between the school and its community as well as between the school and its higher authorities and it requires a significant shift from the centralised to participatory school organisation and management.

The implications for school mapping and micro-planning from this are obvious. First, the analysis above has increased the awareness of the factors to be considered when designing these exercises. School mapping involves the soliciting of information from different groups in the communities. This then requires the designing of methods and procedures to enhance local community participation in the planning of education in their geographical areas. This points to the fact that the search for solutions to improve schooling in Malawi must begin with the attempt to provide minimum levels of essential school inputs in the various localities. For example, in order for the local authorities to identify where schools are needed or where imbalances exists, they will need to be equipped with accurate and timely information. On the other hand, micro-planning will enable the satisfaction of these concerns to improve the functioning of the educational system by reinforcing regional and local planning activities. It will ensure greater equality in the distribution of educational services, a better adaptation of these to the needs of the local communities and a more efficient use of all the available resources. The participation method by the local communities in planning efforts, embedded in school mapping and micro-planning, can be seen to be in line with the current decentralisation process in Malawi.

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