

7.3 KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS OF POST PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION

The approach to evaluation involved an experimental research design and different approaches to data collection including quantitative data, achievement testing, focus group interviews and ratings, and self report questionnaires. Some informal observation was also used to support some conclusions. A number of lessons have been learned as a result of this approach, and these are listed as follows.

7.3.1 Access Improvement in Nkhata Bay and Mchinji

Among the six pilot districts, only Nkhata Bay and Mchinji conducted the classroom block construction projects. This was done to see the difference between the pilot districts which conducted both classroom construction and those which had capacity development projects and the ones which conducted only capacity development. As for the achievements in access to primary schools based on the quantitative data collection at school level, Nkhata Bay had relatively good pupils to classroom ratio at the baseline and improved it at the post pilot. Mchinji had the worst ratio at the baseline and improved it a little at the post pilot, although the ratio of 128:1 was still very high. We can not say that this was caused by NIPDEP.

When we consider the fact that Nkhata Bay and Mchinji were the two of the three districts among the 6 (six) pilot districts, which improved pupils to classroom ratio from the baseline to the post pilot, it may not be unreasonable to say that there might have been some influence from NIPDEP as to the improvement in the access to primary schools in Nkhata Bay and Mchinji.

7.3.2 Combination and Scale of Interventions

It was one of the initial intentions of NIPDEP to see the increase in efficiency and the effectiveness combined with classroom construction and personnel capacity building. Both Nkhata Bay and Mchinji, which carried out the classroom construction projects, conducted INSET, also, in the NIPDEP pilot projects. When looking at the results of the achievement test, Nkhata Bay and Mchinji had steadily increased scores for teachers from the baseline to the post pilot evaluation with Ntchisi. Ntchisi conducted the INSET pilot project for primary and for the SMC in the NIPDEP pilot projects. Additionally, in Ntchisi, a large scale program of classroom construction has been carried out with financial assistance of DfID.

Therefore, when only judging from the teachers scores in Nkhata Bay, Mchinji and Ntchisi on the achievement tests, it might be possible to say NIPDEP was effective in improving teachers motivation and teaching skills through the provided inputs. Based on the low scores of the pupils and the students in the achievement testing, however, we have to understand even with the major classroom construction, like the one in Ntchisi by DfID, can not solve instantly the quality problems in the classrooms.

Even with interventions, many quantitative indicators showed little improvement. As school blocks were completed more students enrolled; off-setting some of the potential gains in pupil to classroom ratio. Lack of anticipation of a dramatic increase in enrollments, as a result of a good public awareness campaign, such as the one in Machinga, may lead to frustration and then later increased dropout rates, overcrowding and other negative consequences. Where such outcomes did not materialize, the lack of change in certain

quantitative indicators such as lower enrollment for girls in secondary education, decrease in safe water, and significant shortage of desks must be overcome by much larger amounts of inputs, with the caution that increased inputs will create other problems if they are not anticipated.

7.3.3 Capacity in Data Collection

An examination of various raw data tables suggests strange patterns. For example, the absence rate table, containing baseline, mid point and post pilot scores, varies dramatically with the mid point score, spiking five times as high as the baseline and post pilot scores. In addition, post pilot rater scores for process variables show an excessive use of zeros as compared to the baseline and mid point scores.

These and other examples suggest problems with instrumentation and data gathering, including with focus group raters. An item analysis of the achievement testing should have been done to determine the difficulty level for each question. This was not done. The exceedingly low scores related to secondary mathematics, especially, may suggest that the questions were too difficult even though they were based on the curriculum. The inter-rater technique used in the focus group analysis was developed as a way to reduce bias in scoring results. Nevertheless, the excessive number of zeros used in the post pilot evaluation suggests that different raters scored results quite differently, even though all raters received training. Finally, such quantitative variables as absence rates are more complicated to compute than imagined. Given that accurate students' records are not always kept and that data collectors may not have applied the right formula for computing absence rates, errors could be significantly high.

The impact of the pilot projects to the district education achievements were difficult to measure; because the project scales were too small and the project sites were too scattered to produce any visible outputs and outcomes; and there were various projects being carried out by the districts by the international development partners and by NGOs. We could not tell whether positive or negative change was caused by NIPDEP. If the main purpose of the NIPDEP pilot projects was to measure the impact of inputs in teaching and learning or other intended outcomes, the pilot project design and the site selection should have been properly done. However, NIPDEP regarded capacity development of the district officers as the main purpose of the pilot projects, which made it difficult to measure outcomes and impacts by the post pilot project evaluation.

7.3.4 Evaluation Design

Normally, the research design is decided before project activities begin. The design includes controlling the experimental environment, computing errors of measurement, and correlating significance levels based on varying sample sizes. Although used, appropriate statistical analyses were not applied such as computing standard deviations and regression analysis. This design was inappropriate for this pilot project model. Instead, a model should have been chosen which was compatible with the type of project where it was possible to control for outside interferences. Often a case study approach might have been used, involving observations as the primary data collection technique. Since the research design was not compatible with the project design, results are highly suspect.

CHAPTER VIII: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIPDEP

OVERVIEW:

This Chapter reports on the processes of capacity building under NIPDEP, the approaches to it and the findings of the assessment to measure achievement levels of capacity development among the counterparts, Core Trainers, district education officers etc.

To determine changes, three surveys were carried out, one during the course of executing the project and a second one towards the end and a final survey three months after the completion of the pilot projects. The assessment on capacity development in NIPDEP was conducted by CDI with technical guidance from the Core Trainers and the NIPDEP Team.

The assessment found that there was a great growth in capacities in general among the division and the pilot district officers, although more efforts were needed in data management, budgeting, site selection, financial management etc. The capacity developed among the pilot districts officers was more substantial than the one among the non-pilot district officers because of their experience with pilot project implementation.

8.1 APPROACH: METHODOLOGY, SCHEDULE AND OPERATION STRUCTURE

One of the key objectives of NIPDEP was capacity building at all system levels, implementing, monitoring and evaluating education projects. The direct target groups included 1) counterparts (officers of MoE headquarters); 2) Core Trainers (division planners); 3) DEM, CPEA, DPD and DoF of all of the 33 education districts; and 4) PMT and TF members of the six pilot districts.

For effective planning and implementation of education projects within limited resources, capacity development and institutional strengthening is required to achieve the desired education goals, such as PIF goals and the MDGs in the education sector. The logical flow of capacity development in NIPDEP and the indicators to measure capacity developed through NIPDEP are summarized in the logical framework in Table 8-1.

Although much of the discussion in this presentation centers on the DA and DEM office personnel, to an extent the core trainers are also mentioned in the capacity building process. It is important to note that there was a limitation in presenting the capacity building process and the results in non-pilot districts since the face-to-face interaction was limited to largely the three occasions when they were invited for formulating, reviewing and updating their DEPs.

Table 8-1: Logical Framework of NIPDEP (as of August 2005)

Project Summary	Indicators	Data Source of Indicators	Important Conditions
<p>Long-term Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative and quantitative improvement of primary and secondary education in Malawi - Universal primary education and improved gender disparity (Both relate to PIF/MDGs goals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results of the pass rate of the national examination - Achievement level - Enrolment rate - Dropout rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National examination results - EMIS data - School census data at district level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoE's strong ownership and commitment to DEPs and NDEP - Decentralization promoted under NDP.
<p>Mid-term Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational improvements in the primary and secondary education sub-sectors are to be promoted following the DEPs and based on the local needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DEPs are recognized by the National Sector Plan and by related ministries, donors and communities - Use of DEPs under NDEP - No. of projects and outputs produced based on DEPs - Budget flow to the district education sector and use of the funds for improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessment on capacity developed in NIPDEP - Baseline survey, mid-term and post-project evaluations - Post project impact survey by DEM office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education improvement and human resources development to be given priority under MPRSP and MEGS
<p>NIPDEP Program Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity development of the district education officers in planning, implementing, monitoring, marketing and resource mobilization. - Develop and strengthen a mechanism in MoE and the division offices to support the districts in updating and implementing DEPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of DEPs updated - District personnel capacity in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. data management b. updating/marketing of DEPs c. implementation, financial management and community mobilization in the NIPDEP pilot projects - MoE and division offices' capacity in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. financial and technical support for the districts in DEPs management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School census and EMIS data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Division planners and district personnel will not be replaced or move to other sectors more frequently
<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct DEP updating workshops with the officers of the 33 education districts - Implement NIPDEP pilot projects with the 6 pilot districts - Prepare NDEP 	<p>Input (personnel, physical and financial resources):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steering and Technical Committees - Core Trainers - District personnel: DPT and PMT/TF members - Community members - NIPDEP Team - Funds for the study and the pilot project implementation 		<p>Education stakeholders' good understanding, collaboration and commitment</p>

8.1.1 Methodologies and Target Groups

The capacity building assessment is based on a self-evaluation questionnaire, which was administered to members of either the PMT or TF in the six pilot districts and to DPD, DEM, CPEA and DoF or their representatives in the non-pilot districts. The self-evaluation questionnaire survey was done three times; namely the preliminary, first follow-up and final follow-up surveys. The schedule of the survey is shown in Table 8-2:

Table 8-2: Schedule of the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire Survey

Surveys	Schedule	DEPs Workshops
1. Preliminary evaluation questionnaire survey	July-August 2004	Before and/or during the DEPs updating workshops
2. 1 st follow-up survey	October-November 2004	After the DEPs updating workshops
3. Final follow-up survey	May-June 2005	Impact survey in the end of NIPDEP

In the first follow-up survey, conducted towards the end of the project and after the project, the same questionnaire was administered during a Construction workshop and DEP updating workshop to a sample of members (TF and/or PMT members) from the six pilot districts and at visits to selected non-pilot districts in all six divisions (Rumphi, Mzuzu, Nkhotakota, Salima, Lilongwe City, Lilongwe Rural East, Balaka, Zomba Urban and Rural, Blantyre Rural and Mwanza).

Overall the questionnaire addressed the following areas:

- (1) Current education conditions in the district;
- (2) Education services in the district;
- (3) Community involvement in education;
- (4) Education development projects in the district;
- (5) The PMT/TF members' involvement in community development activities; and,
- (6) Perception and participation of PMT/TF members in NIPDEP project.

The questionnaire, which addressed three broad areas of intervention (training, procurement and construction), had both closed and open ended questions. In addition to the questionnaire, an assessment of the updated DEPs was done to determine learning guide applications made with anecdotes and observations to support the results of the questionnaire.

The significance of this evaluation was in:

- (1) measuring the output and outcome of the capacity built by NIPDEP in and for the education sector at the district and division level, and
- (2) formulating lessons learned and recommendations to improve the sustainability of the capacity built by NIPDEP and to strengthen future capacity building strategies and projects conducted by MoE and/or JICA and other donor agencies.

Thus, in aggregate, the evaluation offered different key players an opportunity to determine what and how capacity development can be advanced in Malawi with respect to project management and implementation. In addition, the evaluation provided NIPDEP insights of what can be done to make management and implementation processes a success.

8.1.2 Schedule and Operation Structure

Table 8-3 shows the major capacity development activities, as training workshops, and their schedules conducted during NIPDEP.

Table 8-3: Capacity Development Activities in NIPDEP

Major Workshop	Dates
1) Inception report seminar (kick-off Seminar) – pilot districts	January 2003
2) Understanding the decentralization progress – pilot districts	January 2003
3) Preliminary reviewing and updating of the DEPs – pilot districts	January 2003
4) Reviewing draft stakeholder questionnaire – pilot districts	February 2003
5) Pilot project planning in the pilot districts	February/March 2003
6) Formulating the pilot project implementation framework	March 2003
7) Seminar of the pilot project implementation	June 2003
8) Preparation of the draft of the NDEP – national	June 2003
9) Mid-term evaluation of the pilot districts	November 2003
10) Reviewing and updating DEP 3 batches: south, central and north and pilot districts (national)	November 2003 & February/March 2004
11) Reviewing NIPDEP pilot projects Phase I	March 2004
12) Planning NIPDEP pilot projects Phase II	March 2004
13) Financial management training – PMT/TF treasurers and vice treasurers	April 2004
14) Pilot project implementation seminar	May 2004
15) Pilot project implementation planning in the district	June 2004
16) Updating DEPs 3 batches: south, central & north, and pilot districts	August & November 2004
17) Evaluation of pilot projects Phase I and II	November 2004
18) Final Report Seminar	August 2004
19) DEP Updating of pilot districts	December 2004
20) DEP Market Fair for all education districts	August 2005

Separate workshops were conducted to develop capacity for Directors of Public Works and their immediate officers (works supervisors and/or building foremen) who in most cases were also TF members for construction activities/projects. The dates for construction workshops were timed in line with the dates for workshops 7), 9), 14) and 17) in order to be in line with the implementation schedule of the entire program. There was also a financial management training (4th – 6th April 2004) which was attended by PMT treasurers and vice-treasurers and TF treasurers.

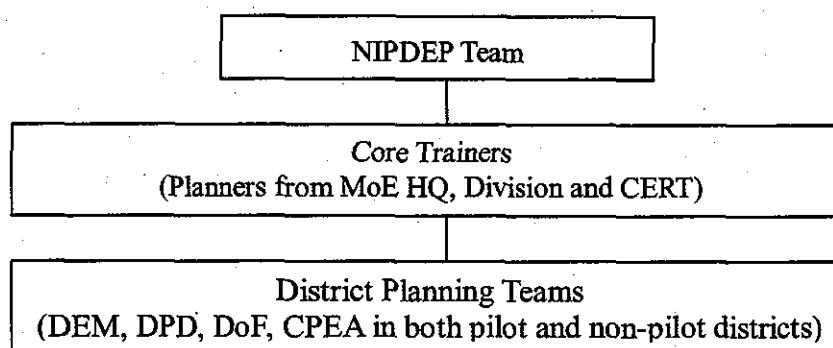
As was expected, program training activities were based on manuals which addressed issues such as:

- (1) Pilot project plans – activity identification, budgeting and its presentation
- (2) Planning and financial management, management planning and application, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- (3) Structure care and maintenance mainly for buildings and procurement
- (4) Guidelines for updating DEPs and related inputs (data), and

(5) Marketing of DEPs.

In line with the training materials meant for DEP updating and without losing sight of the micro-planning training materials as the starting point for district education planning, the operation structure for the training took cognisance of the NIPDEP Team, Core Trainers, district personnel of the DPTs from NSMMP (see Figure 8-1 below).

Figure 8-1: Operational Structure & Staffing in NIPDEP Capacity Development



The operational structure during NIPDEP, in comparison with the Micro-Planning Project, made use of the Core Trainers (division planners) as national trainers and district personnel (DEM, DPD, DoF and CPEA), as key trainers of their respective districts, upon acquisition of planning skills. The NIPDEP Team largely facilitated the capacity building process by:

- (1) working as resource persons during the national workshops; and,
- (2) monitoring the pilot districts and advising the respective project teams TF and PMT) accordingly.

In practice, the capacity building operation structure followed the project cycle process (planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) for the pilot districts. Thus it was expected that the pilot districts will have a thorough grounding on what planning and its related project process involves in comparison with the non-pilot districts. For the non-pilot districts, much of the training was on planning, with emphasis on the preparation of the DEPs and its related actions such as the:

- (1) use and translation of national policies for and at the district level;
- (2) use of data and opinions in decision-making;
- (3) identification of problems and challenges as strategies and projects; and,
- (4) activity budgeting and resource mobilization.

8.2 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN DEP UPDATING

As noted in Chapter II, the first group to undergo DEP updating training were pilot districts which had to prepare and rationalize their projects based on their respective district DEPs for the NIPDEP pilot project Phase I. These six pilot districts went through a further DEPs updating process in March 2004 in preparation for planning for pilot project proposals of the NIPDEP pilot project Phase II. Parallel to the pilot districts, the non pilot districts had a session each in 2003 and 2004 (see Table 8-3).

Capacity building under DEP updating highlights two issues:

- (1) Relevance and applicability of the workshops; and,
- (2) Readiness and team work

8.2.1 Findings from Workshop Evaluation Done by the Trainees

The evaluation of these workshops, done by the district personnel (trainees) from both pilot and non-pilot districts, shows that the training was relevant to the current work/functions of the participants, presentations raised participants readiness to update their DEPs and the training itself had relevant information for application (solving problems).

The responses from the workshop participants can be summarized as follows:

- (1) A number of trainees stated that this training was applicable in their respective professions, as DPDs when preparing the DDP; whereas DEMs felt that the training was an eye opener in how they can initiate planning issues prior to involving the division planner and others.
- (2) An evaluation of the relevance and applicability of the workshop, showed that in all cases when a workshop was done the participants' order of response was between average and maximum. All participants felt that the workshops were useful and/or relevant to their work in general and to specific functions. Also, all participants recognized that the workshops raised their readiness and ability to update DEPs.
- (3) The training was not able to assist fully the participants to prepare their activity budgets with relative ease. The problem of budgeting should be seen in the light of time given for preparing activity budget during the training workshop in relation to determining the gap analysis and problem identification, because one or more issues resulted in taking more time to complete at the expense of other exercises.
- (4) The teams may have resorted to the use of one particular individual (DoF or their representative) at the expense of the entire team members to minimize the loss of time. This should be seen in a positive way, because it entailed the importance of team work in the light of the division of labour. Furthermore it was a reflection of the actual situation at work with respect to division of labour at both DA and DEM office.

On aggregate DEP updating:

- (1) imparted above average level of planning to both the pilot and non-pilot districts;
- (2) exposed poor to non-existent ability to use the computers for word processing and spreadsheets; and,
- (3) showed that leadership and team work enhanced to an above average level all aspects (understanding the purpose/objectives; leading discussions and performing tasks prioritising and project preparation), but they were average in delegating tasks and creating teamwork.

8.2.2 Findings from Evaluation Checklist Filled by the NIPDEP Team and Core Trainers

On the basis of the aggregated results from the checklist for rating the updated DEP completed by the NIPDEP Team and Core Trainers during the 2nd DEP updating workshop (Table 8-4), a rating of "Good" received 135 points, which was the highest among the five ratings; followed by 105 points for "Average," 25 points for "Poor," and 19 points for "Very Good." It can be assumed that the entire process was a success (see the sampled tabulation presented - 22 out of 33 districts in Table 8-4). However it should be noted that there were extremes and this was due to too much turnover of staff (participants) from the non-pilot districts.

The checklist results show that the trainees felt more comfortable when preparing the vision statement (5 points in “Very Good” and 17 points in “Good”) and the socio-economic profile and major educational achievements (2 points in “Very Good” and 17 points in “Good”). The logical flow of their DEPs was also enhanced (0 in “Very Good” and 16 points in “Good”), compared to the original DEPs, although there is some aspects for improvements as was already stated in Chapter III of this Final Report.

The clarity of the DEP text was also improved (two points, “Very Good” and 15 points “Good”), this was mainly because trainee’s computer literacy increased and most of them could input and edit their DEP text by themselves. During the workshops to prepare the original DEPs during NSMMP in 2001 and 2002, many of the trainees had no skills to use computers and so NIPDEP had to employ computer operators to help input their text. This was one of the great improvements from NSMMP to NIPDEP; however, more capacity at the district offices should be developed in data input and management, including how to use basic computer software such as Word and Excel.

The points for accuracy of budget plans, reality of implementation schedule, and understanding the mobilization plan were spread evenly even among “Poor,” “Average,” and “Good.” With respect to the ability to handle/calculate data there is some room for improvement.

Table 8-4: Aggregate Rating of Checklist of DEPs Revised During the 2nd Workshops

Content Area Presentation	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good
1. Vision statement	0	0	0	17	5
2. Socio-economic profile	0	0	3	17	2
3. Major educational achievements	0	1	12	8	2
4. Summarizing of stakeholder survey	0	2	8	9	3
5. Gap Analysis	0	0	10	11	1
6. Logical presentation of 4 and 5	0	2	9	10	1
7. Link of Chapters I to III	0	1	13	9	0
8. Accuracy of budget plans	1	4	13	3	1
9. Reality of implementation schedule	2	5	8	6	1
10. Understanding mobilization plan	1	7	8	6	0
11. Logical flow of DEP	0	0	6	16	0
12. Ability to handle/calculate data	0	3	10	8	1
13. Clarity of text	0	0	5	15	2
Aggregate rating	4	25	105	135	19

8.2.3 Capacity Development for the Non-Pilot District Personnel in DEP Updating

In line with the DEP updating, the survey revealed that the non-pilot districts responded positively on capacity building as shown below in Table 8-5 in the preliminary survey (before the updating workshop in August 2004), Table 8-6 first follow-up (after the updating workshop in November 2005), and Table 8-7 for final follow-up (as an impact survey of NIPDEP in June 2005).

The results of the preliminary survey show that 40.4% of the trainees from the non-pilot districts rated their skills in the collection and handling of education data as “Good,” and

31.1% of them rated their skills in DEP preparation and updating as “Good.” These numbers were increased to 45.9% and 44.8%, respectively, on the first follow-up survey, while they decreased to 36.1% and 32.4%, respectively, on the impact survey. They gave higher ratings for their being better able to provide improved education services because they prepared and now have DEPs; the percentage for “Good” was 37.9% for the first follow-up and 47.5% for the impact survey. At the preliminary survey, 73.6% of them rated “Good” for this evaluated item; this extreme percentage might tell some (or many) of them overestimated their skills before they had practiced it.

At the same time, these results may reveal that they have come to assess their own competence more properly after they updated DEPs, and they have come to consider the DEPs in a more comprehensive context of district education improvement. The percentage shows that their skills for marketing of the DEPs needs to be improved.

Table 8-5: Preliminary Survey Summary of Responses from Non-pilot Districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved	Total
1. Collection and handling of education data	8.0%	4.0%	37.4%	40.4%	10.2%	100.0%
2. DEP preparation and updating	5.0	8.4	48.6	31.1	6.9	100.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	20.6	19.4	41.1	13.6	5.3	100.0
4. Detailed planning	26.2	7.2	39.6	22.8	4.2	100.0
5. Implementation of INSET	20.4	7.2	29.0	36.8	6.6	100.0
6. Implementation of procurement	22.5	7.3	31.0	29.2	9.8	100.0
7. Implementation of construction	26.2	9.8	26.7	28.7	8.6	100.0
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation	31.2	4.6	25.8	29.4	9.0	100.0
9. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	3.9	1.0	3.9	73.6	17.6	100.0
10. Assessment of development in district	9.9	10.2	28.3	34.0	17.6	100.0

Table 8-6: First Follow-up Summary of Responses from Non-pilot Districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved	Total
1. Collection and handling of education data	12.2%	6.7%	24.4%	45.9%	10.8%	100.0%
2. DEP preparation and updating	15.7	10.8	22.8	44.8	5.9	100.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	29.1	16.5	33.0	17.5	3.9	100.0
4. Detailed planning	14.0	13.1	35.6	27.4	9.9	100.0
5. Implementation of INSET	12.8	12.8	26.4	35.2	12.8	100.0
6. Implementation of procurement	14.0	11.9	26.6	34.0	13.5	100.0
7. Implementation of construction	10.8	14.6	26.0	37.8	10.8	100.0
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation	9.6	12.0	30.4	33.3	14.7	100.0
9. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	20.0	11.0	20.5	37.9	10.6	100.0
10. Assessment of development in district	11.1	8.6	29.2	31.2	19.9	100.0

Table 8-7: Final Follow-up Summary of Responses from Non-pilot Districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved	Total
1. Collection and handling of education data	17.7%	6.4%	21.7%	36.1%	18.1%	100.0%
2. DEP preparation and updating	17.0	7.2	32.8	32.4	10.6	100.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	21.3	20.5	29.8	24.8	3.6	100.0
4. Detailed planning	12.7	10.6	27.1	37.9	11.7	100.0
5. Implementation of INSET	12.2	10.1	39.4	31.9	6.4	100.0
6. Implementation of procurement	15.7	11.4	22.3	38.1	12.5	100.0
7. Implementation of construction	7.2	55.9	11.9	18.8	6.2	100.0
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation	15.2	5.1	24.7	40.4	14.6	100.0
9. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	9.8	8.0	17.2	47.5	17.5	100.0
10. Assessment of development in district	5.4	6.8	23.3	45.2	19.3	100.0

8.3 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN PILOT PROJECTS

Under the pilot projects, the assessment of capacity development was determined from the following areas:

- (1) Data collection and management
- (2) Planning
- (3) Project implementation
- (4) Monitoring
- (5) Budgeting and financial management
- (6) Evaluation of outputs and outcomes
- (7) Facilitation and coordination
- (8) Sensitization and mobilization of community members
- (9) Report preparation

Based on the responses by a total of 81 PMT and 81 TF members from the six pilot districts of Machinga, Mchinji, Nkhata bay, Nsanje, Ntchisi and Thyolo, the overall results indicate that the PMT and TF members had improved greatly in general project management. More than half of the members stated that they were capable of handling issues in most of the above listed activities. The results further showed that members gained capacities in data collection and management, planning, report preparation and facilitation and coordination. Apparently, this indicates that there is now capacity at district level to carry out project activities. Mchinji, Machinga and Thyolo district had exceptionally high and increased capacity than the other three (Nkhata Bay, Ntchisi and Nsanje).

The above results also indicate that the district teams are capable of implementing projects and this should act as a basis for implementing future projects at the district level. There was a small percentage who indicated poor performance and no acquisition of skills in all the listed areas.

In determining capacity in relation to implementation of procurement activities the following areas were taken into consideration:

- (1) Needs assessment;
- (2) Selection of target schools;
- (3) Bidding and selection of suppliers;
- (4) Community mobilization; and,
- (5) Follow up and evaluation.

Overall results show that the capacity to understand and follow procurement procedures had improved in all districts, although specific areas of improvement were strongly observed in needs assessment in Machinga, Ntchisi and Mchinji: community mobilization in all districts (See Tables 8-7, 8-8 and 8-9 below as per preliminary, first follow-up and final survey findings). But improvement was marginal to poor in all six districts in selecting target schools and bidding.

The changes in the percentages in the three tables were not clearly identified. They gave higher rating of "Good" or "Greatly Improved" for collection and handling of education data, DEP preparation and updating, implementation of INSET and PMT/TF performance in implementation both at the 1st follow-up and at the final follow-up. This might not be a fair assessment; however, the results might imply their improved confidence and sense of ownership. They were relatively fair when they assessed their own skills in marketing of DEPs and implementing of construction, which reflects their experience in NIPDEP.

In assessing INSET, in relation to capacity building, it showed that although the PMT and TF members stated that it was well done, there were a number of things that required improvement. INSET was largely facilitated through the intervention of CDI. This organization, on behalf of the NIPDEP Team, assisted the districts in gaining significant improvement. In the words of Mr. Khoropa (CPEA from Nsanje) the coming in of CDI changed things for the better because the key district personnel learnt much, gained confidence and were and are able to do a number of things with minimal intervention from outsiders. Furthermore, the projects and their training have made the districts aware of their internal resources.

In conclusion, it cannot be doubted that the pilot project led to positive changes which inevitably were a reflection of the capacity development taking place in the pilot districts.

Table 8-8: Preliminary Survey of Pilot Districts on Improvement in Capacity Developed (% scores)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly improved	Total
1. Data collection and management	6.2%	3.7%	23.4%	42.0%	24.7%	100.0%
2. Planning	4.9	2.5	22.2	56.8	13.6	100.0
3. Implementation	6.2	6.2	23.4	45.7	18.5	100.0
4. Monitoring	7.2	6.2	26.1	44.5	16.0	100.0
5. Budgeting and financial management	3.7	1.2	37.1	42.0	16.0	100.0
6. Evaluation of outputs and outcomes	4.9	2.5	23.4	49.4	19.8	100.0
7. Facilitation and coordination	3.7	2.5	23.4	43.2	27.2	100.0
8. Sensitization and mobilization of community members	4.9	4.9	26.0	49.4	14.8	100.0
9. Report preparation	2.5	0	18.5	49.4	29.6	100.0

Table 8-9: First Follow-up Summary of Responses from Pilot Districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved	Total
1. Collection and handling of education data	4.3%	2.2%	27.8%	45.7%	20.0%	100.0%
2. DEP preparation and updating	6.6	7.9	14.7	49.7	21.1	100.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	9.6	19.1	39.9	25.7	5.7	100.0
4. Detailed planning	2.4	5.3	31.1	42.6	18.6	100.0
5. Implementation of INSET	5.7	5.0	24.3	43.6	21.4	100.0
6. Implementation of procurement	5.2	4.0	30.2	36.0	24.6	100.0
7. Implementation of construction	12.5	6.9	26.3	36.6	17.7	100.0
8. PMT/TF performance has been improved through implementing NIPDEP pilot projects	1.9	2.4	20.2	48.0	27.5	100.0
9. Capability for following activities has been build through NIPDEP project	2.9	1.3	21.5	48.9	25.4	100.0
10. The education services in own district has improved during NIPDEP project	5.7	3.7	26.1	43.7	20.8	100.0
11. Assessment of development in district	4.7	5.7	18.9	33.8	36.9	100.0

Table 8-10: Final Follow-up Summary of Responses from Pilot Districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No imprvmt	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved	Total
1. Collection and handling of education data	10.1%	4.7%	24.9%	46.8%	13.5%	100.0%
2. DEP preparation and updating	11.1	5.5	28.9	41.1	13.4	100.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	19.1	10.1	32.3	28.6	9.9	100.0
4. Detailed planning	7.3	6.7	24.1	42.5	19.4	100.0
5. Implementation of INSET	8.9	4.6	22.2	46.6	17.7	100.0
6. Implementation of procurement	15.4	7.4	21.5	33.4	22.3	100.0
7. Implementation of construction	24.4	7.9	20.5	29.7	17.4	100.0
8. PMT/TF performance has been improved through implementing NIPDEP pilot projects	4.6	3.0	21.9	44.3	26.2	100.0
9. Capability for following activities has been build through NIPDEP project	4.2	2.4	20.3	46.3	26.8	100.0
10. The education services in own district has improved during NIPDEP project	8.4	2.5	22.5	46.5	20.1	100.0
11. Assessment of development in district	7.4	4.2	19.0	38.1	31.3	100.0

8.4 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE ADMINISTRATION LEVEL

The activities that were evaluated in the light of capacity building in the administration level were as follows:

- (1) Supervision and coordination by the DEMs office;
- (2) Information to and from the DEMs office;

- (3) Supervision by PEAs;
- (4) SMC involvement in school management;
- (5) Communication between stakeholders and district;
- (6) Communication between schools and zones;
- (7) Communication between zones and district;
- (8) Communication between district and division education office; between district and MoE; and between DEM and DA; and,
- (9) Communication between DEM and DA.

A high percentage of the PMT members said that supervision and coordination by the office of the DEM had greatly improved in their respective districts. Exceptional positive observations on improvements were noted in Mchinji and Thyolo. The capacity of the DEM's offices was found poor by two percent of the PMT and TF members who responded to the questionnaire. Somehow such a negative observation implied that there was still room for improvement for the DEMs to be fully seen as changed and developed in management.

In terms of the flow of information to and from the DEMs office, PMT and TF members indicated that it was good. The highest percentage reported this came from PMT members, 28.6 %. At the district level, Mchinji and Thyolo had a high percentage of members saying that the information flow to and from the DEMs office was good. Thus it can be construed that the district had improved its capacity to communicate properly with stakeholders, zones and schools and within the district.

PEA supervision in the light of management was another area that was evaluated. Overall results from the PMT and TF members indicate that PEA supervision was good in terms of school supervision and PEA to teacher or vice versa. Although the link between the management/supervision of the project and that of the school may be regarded as remote, it has a bearing on that what is learnt through the project is transferable to other work. Amongst the six pilot districts, Ntchisi, Thyolo and Mchinji, the PEAs had improved capacity to do supervision. Mchinji could be an example of NIPDEP's capacity building effort to change and provide growth when the PEAs showed their confidence and ability to salvage an abandon the INSET during Phase II.

In terms of SMC involvement in school management, 16.3% of the TF members said the involvement of the SMCs in school management had greatly improved while another 43.9% said it was good. These results indicate that community members were taking part in running schools and in decision making. At district level, Mchinji had the highest percentage stating that SMC involvement was good (10.2%), followed by Thyolo and Ntchisi with 9.2 % each. When these results are interpreted in terms of capacity building of SMCs with respect to school management, it shows that the pilot projects had a positive affect. It is interesting that empirical evidence shows that Mchinji had better community participation and mobilization than say Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi. This could be a reflection of improved and functional school committees.

Communication is vital in the implementation of any pilot project. In this case, evaluation was done to assess communications at different levels, such as between stakeholders and districts, schools and zones, zones and districts, district and division, district and MoE and DEM and DA. At PMT and TF levels, overall results indicate that communication was good

between stakeholders and districts (50%), zones and districts (48.0%) and district and MoE (45.9%). There were lower percentages of respondents, however, who said communication was good between district and division levels and between DEM and DA level. These two areas are critical areas and need to be improved for future DEP implementation. At district level, a high percentage of the members indicated that communication was good between school and zone, zone and district and district and MoE.

8.5 KEY ISSUES

The following could be advanced as lessons learned in evaluating capacity building:

- (1) The emphasis on hands-on learning with presentations and documents which vitalized the training proved beneficial because the trainees gained confidence in whatever they were learning could be done in practice on the job. The trainees implemented the activities with a significant degree of certainty. Capacity development has to advanced on two fronts, namely in theory and in practice. In order to leave a mark on the trainees. Otherwise practical learning without the backing of theory can lead to frustration and disaster; likewise theory without practice can not make any difference on sense when training is offered to employees who are already working in a particular mode and fashion.
- (2) The use of Core Trainers and DPTs (mainly DEMs and DPDs) was practical because it minimized time wastage in a number of cases. For example, the districts were able to solicit the views of the DEM and DPD, thereafter proceed with their activity. It may be recognized that this system was not fully appreciated where the DEM and DPD were weak. Actually, it negatively affected progress in terms of time management.
- (3) It was observed that there was need for more time when it came to DEP preparation in order to allow districts to complete their first draft and offer better understanding of the issues, such as activity budgeting, since a number of the participants, mainly among the non-pilot districts, were new.
- (4) Continuity of the same personnel in reviewing and updating DEPs and implementing them is critical, if capacity building is to be fully realized. On the other hand, pilot districts showed that the period for familiarizing and enabling change to take hold must not be underestimated, because people have different levels of understanding, mainly when activities being pursued are new or not of the usual and obvious type.
- (5) Limiting trainees to those directly in district education activities reinforced the possibility of updating the content in the context of local needs and generating a sense of ownership of the DEPs. The continued pairing of DEMs and DAs proved useful and fruitful because the two complemented each other in understanding education and financial issues.
- (6) Finally, training materials should address all key areas that will be practiced comprehensively and should be in formatted readiness for being delivered as handouts. At the same time, trainers have to carefully study the training materials in advance to make a thorough presentation of the area covered. This is because, currently, many trainees rely on and feel comfortable with the written materials given in advance for reference, especially for adult learners.

PART IV:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW:

This Chapter covers the results of the evaluation on NIPDEP from February 2003 to September 2005 and the lessons learned, observation and recommendations prepared by the NIPDEP Team.

NIPDEP produced the outputs as initially planned such as 33 DEPs updated, NDEP and the number of district officers trained; however the NIPDEP impact on the education sectors, through capacity development of those in the implementation of the pilot projects was not yet obvious. NIPDEP activities were believed to be relevant, also; because the DEPs were prepared to advance the national policies, including the decentralization policy, to the budget plan of the National Education Sector Plan including the funds for the annual updating of DEPs.

To improve the DEP updating and implementation system and the growing competence, skills, leadership and confidence among the district officers, the MoE should support the district activities in DEP updating and implementation. The next phase of NIPDEP needs to be properly designed for more effective formal capacity development or pilot project implementation and evaluation.

9.1 CONCLUSION

The outputs and outcomes of NIPDEP from February 2003 to September 2005 are summarized, as shown in the Table 9-1, based on the findings and key issues described from Chapter I to Chapter V and the results and the lessons learned from the three types of evaluations reported in Chapters VI, VII and VIII:

Table 9-1: Evaluation Results of NIPDEP

Evaluation Viewpoints	Results
(1) Achievements	<p>The expected outputs of NIPDEP were created and achieved as planned in the Scope of Work signed by MoE (MoEST at that time) and JICA in October 2002, although there is still room for the enhancement of district officers' capacities in data management, planning, project implementation and monitoring of DEPs.</p> <p>1) Documents produced by NIPDEP were (see Chapters III, IV and V):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 33 updated District Education Plans (DEPs) - National District Education Development Plans (NDEP) - DEPs Updating Manual - NIPDEP Pilot Project Implementation Manual - NIPDEP Post Pilot Project Evaluation Guidelines <p>2) Accomplishments in the area of capacity development were (see Chapter VIII):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - nine Core Trainers (division planners and planners of MoE) trained in data management, planning, facilitation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting - approximately 140 members of the DPTs (district officers) from the 33

Evaluation Viewpoints	Results		
	<p>education districts trained in updating and marketing of DEPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approximately 500 members of the PMTs and TFs of the pilot districts (district officers and community leaders) trained in project implementation and monitoring <p>3) Outputs of the NIPDEP pilot projects (Phase I, Phase II and 2-year total) are shown in the table below (see Chapter IV):</p>		
	Phase I (FY2003)	Phase II (FY2004)	Total
No. of teachers, SMCs and PTAs trained	3,330 teachers 970 SMC/PTA members	1,850 teachers 1,760 SMC/PTA members	5,180 teachers 2,730 SMC/PTA members
Classroom blocks constructed	8 blocks	7 blocks	15 blocks
Teacher houses constructed	13 houses	5 houses	18 houses
Science laboratories constructed	1 lab	1 lab	2 lab
Pit latrines constructed	20 latrines	19 latrines	39 latrines
Boreholes constructed	3 boreholes	2 boreholes	5 boreholes
Fish pond constructed	--	3 ponds	3 ponds
Textbooks procured	5,170 books	3,410 books	8,580 books
Desks and chairs procured	1,400 desks/chairs	1,490 desks/chairs	2,890 desks/chairs
Science kits procured	12 kits	15 kits	27 kits
(2) Relevance	<p>Because of its objectives and approaches, NIPDEP was, is and will be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Relevant to the GoM's decentralization policy: NIPDEP trained the district officers in planning and project management, who will play a key role under the decentralization system, which contributes to the promotion of the GoM's decentralization policy (see Chapter II and VIII). 2) Respondent to Vision 2020, MEGS, MTEF, MPRSP, National HIV/AIDS Strategy and PIF: the DEPs and NDEPs were updated and prepared to fully contribute to the promotion of these national policies (see Chapter II and V). 3) Relevant to the National Education Sector Plan (drafted): the Sector Plan draft included in its budget plan for the annual updating of the DEPs, which means the DEPs as officially accepted as district education plans (see Chapter II and III). 4) Useful in promoting direct budget support programs, through its capacity building in planning and financial management at the district level (see Chapter II). 		
(3) Impact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The annual updating of DEPs will be accepted as a regular and routine task of MoE and the districts and routine funds will be provided, which mentioned in the budget plan of the draft of the National Education Sector Plan (see Chapter II). 2) The DEPs have the latest education statistics in its achievement and problem analysis section, which can be function as useful primary and secondary education database for each district (see Chapter III). 3) A system to update DEPs was understood by DEMs, although their competence and the DEPs quality need to be improved (see Chapters III and VIII). 		

Evaluation Viewpoints	Results
	<p>4) The district officers' sense of ownership of the DEPs increased through the two year updating workshops and the Marketing Fair (see Chapter III).</p> <p>5) Achievement tests and data collection were administered through baseline, mid-point and post-project evaluations to see the impacts of the pilot projects. The evaluation did not document completely clear impacts, although the potentials and problems with the delivery of education services in the pilot districts were identified through these surveys (see Chapter VII).</p> <p>6) It was too early to see the impact of capacity developed by NIPDEP among the district officers. The scale of the pilot projects was too limited to influence substantially education achievements in the pilot districts; however, the major achievements of the pilot districts by contrast with the whole national education sector in Malawi (see Chapter II) before and after NIPDEP are summarized as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The total enrolment in Malawi has increased by 5.2% from 3,009,623 in 2000 to 3,166,786 in 2003; however it is not catching up with the pace of the annual population growth rate of 3% (UNDP). - Most of the pass rates of the national examinations, PLSCE, JCE and MSCE (see Tables 2-4 and 2-5), in the pilot districts increased from 2002 to 2004, although some of the pilot districts still have lower rates than the national average rate. - The pupil to classroom ratio of the pilot districts decreased except Nkhata Bay and Thyolo; Mchinji, Machinga and Thyolo have still higher rates than the PIF goal of 1:80. - The qualified teacher to pupil ratio was worse off in every district, one of the major causes is said to be an increased death rate for teachers from HIV/AIDS infection. <p>7) The capacity among the pilot district education officers was improved in data management, project planning, implementation, monitoring, and financial management, which also enhanced their confidence, competence and leadership in education improvement in their districts (see Chapter IV and VIII).</p> <p>8) During the pilot projects, community participation was promoted and community members worked together, which enhanced their sense of the ownership for projects and schools (Chapter IV).</p> <p>9) The pilot projects included a few projects for gender sensitization, HIV/AIDS prevention and income generation to build a community foundation for improvement in the pilot districts, although the impact was limited (Chapter IV).</p>
(4) Efficiency	<p>1) DEPs updating was carried out following the original schedule (Chapter III).</p> <p>2) National and district EMIS could not be used properly during the DEPs updating, because the latest database and/or statistics books were not ready (Chapter III).</p> <p>3) DPTs included the officers from the DAs, which improved the understanding, cooperation and the support for the DEPs from the DAs (Chapter III).</p> <p>4) Combinations or relationships among the pilot projects were not properly</p>

Evaluation Viewpoints	Results
	<p>considered for the pilot project planning. The types of pilot projects were diversified and the sites were scattered around the districts; therefore, the impacts of pilot projects were diffused and difficult to identify. This needs to be improved in the next phase design (Chapter IV).</p> <p>5) The INSET and procurement pilot projects were conducted following the original schedule, while the construction pilot projects were delayed. These delays affected the schedule for the monitoring and evaluation and report writing. The next phase needs to be designed based on the lessons learned from these projects (Chapter IV).</p> <p>6) Construction sites of the pilot projects were often located in isolated areas and/or were dispersed widely in the districts, especially in the pilot project Phase I, where some were in extremely isolated locations, which negatively affected project supervision and monitoring and that quality control of the outputs (Chapter IV).</p> <p>7) The implementation schedule for the preparation of the NDEP was modified, because the MoE officers did not actively participate in it. Eventually, the NIPDEP Team needed to prepare the first draft of the NDEP to further the process, which was not ideal (Chapter V).</p>
(5) Sustainability	<p>1) The capacity of DEMs in updating of DEPs was improved to some extent by NIPDEP. To enhance the sustainability of the DEPs updating, NIPDEP strengthened the Core Trainer team and prepared a DEPs Updating Manual. To improve the institutional memory, the skills and know-how that DEMs learned from NIPDEP should share with the other members in DEM's offices.</p> <p>2) The planning and implementation department of the MoE needs to be involved more actively in the DEPs updating and the NDEP preparation to strengthen the sustainability of the NIPDEP impact.</p> <p>3) The Planning Department of the MoE needs to show a stronger sense of ownership for NIPDEP and effect better donor coordination to avoid duplication of donor assistance and make better resource allocations.</p> <p>4) Core Trainers were not replaced during NIPDEP and were actively involved in project activities, such as the facilitation during the DEPs updating, the monitoring of the pilot projects and the counterpart training in Japan and Indonesia; they have become a stable group of facilitators and coordinators to further the NIPDEP activities.</p> <p>5) What the district personnel and division planners learned from the DEPs updating workshops needs to be routinely delivered to other district officers by the trainees, because there were many cases from year to year of replacements for division planners and district officers.</p> <p>6) The budget flow from the MoE to the district under the decentralization policy needs to be fully implemented and enhanced by GoM in order to make full use of the NIPDEP outputs of improved professional capacity in project management and financial management in the pilot districts.</p>

9.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOE'S ENHANCEMENT OF DEPS AND NDEP

9.2.1 NDEP and the National Education Sector Plan (Drafted)

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

The development of DEPs was a conscious effort to build capacities at the district level to carry out the national policy objectives of PIF and to develop district education plans on a three year rolling basis in accordance with MTEF. In other words, these NIPDEP efforts were directed toward fulfilling NDP, providing linkages with national educational policies such as PIF and MPRSP.

At the outset of NIPDEP in 2003, the request was made for NIPDEP to develop a national DEP implementation guidelines (NDEP) to fit within the National Education Sector Plan, which was drafted and will be finalized in 2005 under a USAID funded project.

NIPDEP was highly conscious of the need to blend or meld its DEPs and NDEP with the National Education Sector Plan. NIPDEP attempted to provide input from a wide spectrum of national and district level stakeholders for the development of NDEP. NIPDEP tried to provide input into the development of the National Education Sector Plan as it is assumed and understood that NDEP would be an integral part of the National Sector Plan. These inputs were provided in staff to staff inter-changes and in more formal ways through USAID project led workshops. The NDEP, developed with widespread involvement of leaders at both national ministry and district levels, recommended that the Sector Plan encompass the NDEP, as the implementation of national improvement efforts, must be done increasingly through the districts in accordance with the devolution and decentralization policies under which education now operates.

(2) Recommendations

The current draft of the National Education Sector Plan did recognize the annual updating of the DEPs, in the Plan's budget plan, as an official task of the district officers and provided the funds for the districts to carry it out. However, at the same time, NIPDEP was disappointed that there was no mention about the roles of the DEPs and/or the NDEP in its documents. If the MoE had a stronger sense of ownership for NIPDEP and were devoted to the promotion of the devolution policy, they should have clearly introduced the DEPs and the NDEP in its Sector Plan, according to the discussions between the MoE staff members and NIPDEP at the 5th Steering Committee held in February 2005.

It is highly requested by the NIPDEP Team that MoE should reflect and encompass its recommendations in any further drafting or editing of the final Sector Plan to clearly identify the DEPs in it and, the NDEP as the supporting system for the DEPs updating and management. This is critical and essential for the promotion of the decentralization policy in the education sector.

9.2.2 DEPs Usefulness and Sustainability

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

During the past four years, NIPDEP invested in the development by district personnel of DEPs. These DEPs have all been submitted and reviewed by DAs. DA staff were involved in

the development of their DEPs, providing a link between the DEMs and the DA staffs, making approvals by the DA to run more smoothly. The DEPs are apparently now an established part of the planning and budgeting process for the assemblies, which, under law, must develop a DDP for all sectors, as the justification for DDF. In fact, other sectors such as health and transportation, have in many districts followed the lead provided by the DEPs in putting together related plans as components of the DDP.

The production of DEPs has been clearly a major capacity building effort at the district level to train people of the appropriate education and assembly staffs to: 1) use stakeholders to identify needs; document those needs through the uses of local and national databases, 2) agree on development priorities; 3) develop improvement projects and strategies based on the priority needs; 4) carefully cost the projects; and 5) develop implementation schedules and identify monitoring responsibilities.

The credibility level of the DEPs is now sufficiently high so that DEMs and the NIPDEP Team brought forth confident to host a DEP Marketing Fair with international development partners and NGOs to promote support for their implementation in August 2005. The DEPs are firmly rooted in PIF and MPRSP and in the work of the Department of Local Government to devolve planning and management to the district level. DEPs are in accordance, as well, with the three year rolling planning and funding process of the MoE, MTEF. The production of DEPs is certainly one of the major success stories of NIPDEP.

(2) Recommendations

It is recommended that the MoE continue to support and fully sustain the annual updating of DEPs, as shown in the budget plan of the draft of the National Education Sector Plan, through a process similar to those used in NIPDEP. The updating should be ostensibly directed and supported by the staff of the MoE Department of Education Planning with the help of division planners and key DEMs, who have demonstrated special competence in the managing and carrying out the process.

The Core Trainer team has the capacity to train and facilitate the district planners to update, implement and monitor the DEPs and they can use a set of the NIPDEP guideline and manuals: such as NDEP, DEPs Updating Manual, the NIPDEP Pilot Project Implementation Manual and NIPDEP Post Pilot Project Evaluation Guidelines. These capacity and manuals should be maintained and updated as useful institutional memory by Planning Department of MoE.

It is suggested that MoE strengthen the updating, marketing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DEPs with continuing collaboration of JICA. The Planning Department of MoE should use the DEPs updating and marketing workshops as a useful platform to discuss educational development needs with the districts, international development partners and NGOs and to coordinate their resources.

9.2.3 Leadership and Ownership of Educational Development

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

The presence of key leaders in development is obviously critical to success in meeting goals and objectives. It was significant, also, that NIPDEP training provided many persons lacking

such skills and at the outset, certain leadership skills, NIPDEP training activities required leaders to learn how to plan and implement projects. Growth seemed to occur in the vast majority of persons in leadership roles as division planners, DEMs, CPEAs, DPDs and other persons under the DA related to NIPDEP's projects.

The one issue, however, that will probably never cease to be a problem, is the rapid turnover and deployment changes of DEMs and supporting persons. The lack of continuity of the key players at the district level in the delivery of NIPDEP initiatives and projects was a major problem. New people, especially the competent ones, always delayed in catching up the time they could get up to speed with NIPDEP, because they tried to fully understand the process. At the same time they were learning about their new assignment and community environment. For future education projects, the MoE and the GoM must be aware of the turnover problem and allow for continued training to keep those relied on most at effective levels of participation.

The NIPDEP experience has helped those involved to identify persons with leadership potential or ones who already have qualities to think clearly, organize themselves and their work and inspire others to work or volunteer with enthusiasm and commitment. These persons are vital to the long-term improvement of education and Malawi. They are a precious resource that must not be lost, but should be cultivated and put in responsible positions. Development efforts fail when such people are not present. Sustainability is a hopeless idea without sustained capable leadership at all levels.

(2) Recommendations

It is recommended that future projects and the MoE consciously establish a way to systematically identify potential leaders for development work and transmit these impressions, formally or informally, to those making personnel decisions at the GoM or district levels as to appointments, redeployments, advancements or into key development roles at the district level or for special training opportunities in-country or abroad.

Leadership and management training, using learn-by-doing techniques, should be a key element in the planning of future projects, emphasizing leadership enhancement at the district and school levels. Although there may be reluctance to make local people responsible for development activities, the placement of activities within localities should be routine. Material and moral support should be given to those in such roles to help them grow in their leadership and managerial competencies. Future projects must not become top down, but remain bottom-up relying on local leaders for planning, management and evaluation.

It is recommended that the GoM place, as a priority, the resolution of the issues surrounding the locus of responsibility for secondary education to remove the ambiguity as to whether DEMs are responsible for leadership in development activities for secondary schools (CSS or CDSS) in their districts.

9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NEW PROJECT AFTER NIPDEP

9.3.1 DEPs Updating and Decentralization

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

At the beginning of NSMMP and NIPDEP projects, the capacity of those to be impacted was an unknown factor. The GoM's determination to implement a policy of decentralization of GoM functions to the district level, placed a demand at local level to identify and cultivate personnel able to carry out the restructuring of the delivery of the GoM functions and services at a district level.

This fact made the NIPDEP projects highly conscious that one of the major impacts of the effort had to be to identify and train relevant staff within the districts in such activities as planning, assessment of needs, increased stakeholder involvement in schools, management of development projects and programs, financial management of development resources and project monitoring and evaluation.

Without competent people to carry out these activities, the development effort would not have succeeded. For this reason, there was a heavy emphasis on training of key players in the delivery of efforts, especially DEMs, CPEAs, PEAs, some school heads and staff in the DAs, such as DPDs and DoFs, division planners, although already in leadership roles, needed further training in DEPs development and pilot project management liaison and oversight roles. Capacity growth was to be expected among all of those persons above by the NIPDEP project's end.

(2) Recommendations

The DEMs and the members of the DPTs understood the roles of the DEPs and have stronger sense of ownership after the DEP Marketing Fair at the national and division levels. International development partners, NGOs and civil societies are interested in the DEPs and ready for using it.

As mentioned before, MoE now has the Core Trainer team as capable facilitators and a set of manuals as their resources to support DPTs to update and implement the DEPs; however, it is important, also, for the DEMs to share what they learned from NIPDEP and what they experienced during NIPDEP with other staff members to establish an institutional memory for DEPs updating, marketing and implementation in their own office.

It is recommended that a new project after NIPDEP be designed to continue to emphasize capacity building activities for the key and development project related personnel at the district and division levels. This effort should continue to be done through training programs (workshops and other in-service programs) coupled with the continuation of the responsibility of these persons to produce updated DEPs and have the major responsibility for managing, monitoring, evaluating and marketing development projects.

In the new project, the roles and the responsibilities, in the devolved system of the DEM offices, the DAs and the secondary schools, as cost centers, should be clarified. The training contents and programs should be updated.

The DEPs updating workshop should spend more time – 10 days instead of the current 5-day workshop. Additionally, if it is possible, the next project should conduct a remedial one-day workshop prior to bringing the full team together for an updating workshop for those at district who are new to their positions or have no familiarity with the DEPs and the updating process. It should be recommended that the updating team have at least one member capable of basic keyboarding skills, word processing and Excel.

After the DEPs are drafted, it might be helpful for the DPTs to have a meeting with the Planning Department of MoE to introduce their priority strategies and projects and to have a consultation for marketing and fund raising with them.

It might be more useful that the next project gives more attention to the marketing and the fund raising for the DEPs to make the DEP updating more practical and attractive for the district officers, the stakeholders in the communities, the international development partners, NGOs and civil societies to strengthen the outputs, DEM's ownership and donors' interest, of the DEP Marketing Fair in August 2005.

9.3.2 Pilot Project Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

(1) Lessons Learned and Observation

During the planning stage for the pilot projects, the relationship or the mutual impacts among the planned projects were not fully considered. It was the first time for the DPTs to formulate the projects and prepare the project proposals and budget plans. They found it difficult to consider something more than how to formulate individual development projects. In addition, during the pilot project, the NIPDEP Team put more focus on capacity development of the district officers and the community leaders in project implementation and monitoring.

There should have been some strategies provided by the NIPDEP Team for the DPTs about how they can formulate projects, which these districts individual progress will be complementary to each other, so that they could utilize their limited resources more efficiently and maximize impacts.

In addition, the project sites were too disposed over a district territory. This was because the DPTs preferred to spread out the distribution of the benefits among the zones, sometimes to satisfy local political situation. This site selection created several constraints for the NIPDEP Team in supervision and monitoring, especially the construction projects, improving the quality of the INSET and identifying the impacts of the pilot projects.

(2) Recommendations

The new project after NIPDEP will conduct educational development projects as NIPDEP implemented the pilot projects. The purpose of implementing these educational development projects in the next project is to enhance the capacity of the district officers in project planning, implementation, community mobilization, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation.

The development projects might include classroom block construction, INSET, community awareness and procurement. When planning, it is needed to consider a comprehensive approach through the combination of the various types of projects to produce more substantial outputs and outcomes than NIPDEP.

Monitoring and evaluation is important component of the project management. To improve the quality of the project implementation, it is necessary to strengthen the monitoring system, especially in the construction projects.

In the next project, it is suggested that educational development projects will be implemented in at most three districts chosen from the 33 education districts; three districts might be appropriate for effective monitoring to improve the project implementation process and to enhance the quality of the project outputs based on the lessons learned from NIPDEP. To compare the input and the output of the development projects by the post evaluation, it might be useful to choose three districts including one district from the NIPDEP pilot districts, one from the pilot districts of SMASSE or any other donor projects, and one from the districts which have only limited donor inputs.

9.3.3 Pilot Project Implementation: INSET and Awareness Campaigns

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

There were several problems with the smooth and effective conduct of these training programs. Most evident are 1) pre-planning activities, 2) assessment of needs, 3) compatibility of training curriculum and activities with identified needs, 4) poor budgeting for materials, 5) over-emphasis by participants on allowance and compensation issues, 6) lack of take-home materials for future reference and help for others with whom they work, and 7) a lack of resources to conduct follow-up evaluations to determine the impact of the training on their post training performance on the job.

(2) Recommendations

It is recommended that the districts, MoE and MIE, through, perhaps, a special TF, re-examine the delivery of all INSET. The TF should develop, design and disseminate a set of guidelines to correct project delivery management and teaching and learning deficiencies identified through the NIPDEP project and other similar projects and administer a district by district assessment of training needs using a common or standard process recommended by the TF.

The MoE, as a routine responsibility, should annually, using a standard process, district by district, assess the INSET needs for teachers, managers and community support groups, such as members of SMCs. The assessment results would be shared with the DEMs for them to have as an annual systematic picture of the training needs in their district and those nearby. From this information, they would draw up a list of potential training programs in their district for the year and indicate the size and type of programs required, justifications, locations within the district for such training, potential sources of support for the program and a tentative indication of who will deliver it. The list would be provided, also, to the division offices, Ministry and, perhaps, MIE, so that they could be helpful in matching training with available resources.

The DEMs with the help of CPEAs would be responsible for finding the resources to conduct the trainings, plan for them, organize and complete them according to schedule.

The Core Trainers would be responsible for providing coordination where appropriate for cooperation among districts in the delivery of training programs with similar objectives and

target groups. The DEMs would be responsible for conducting evaluations of each program and for organizing and budgeting for follow-up evaluations of each training program to assess the impact of the training on the performance of participants in their work place.

It should be considered, by the next project after NIPDEP, that using the DEPs to identify INSET projects and to decide the contents and targets. This will contribute to shifting of the INSET from a supply-side approach to a demand-side approach.

9.3.4 Pilot Project Implementation: Procurement

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

Procurement was involved with construction projects, and there were significant NIPDEP procurements for desks, textbooks at secondary level, science kits, office machines, such as copiers, computers and other equipment.

Science kits, textbooks, and other items were sometimes ordered by NIPDEP centrally to take advantage of efficiencies and possible get lower prices because of the size of the order. Performance contracts were often not tight enough to insure installation, delivery dates, penalties for not meeting deadlines, qualitative deficiencies, or delivery to site. Terms of such procurement contracts were widely different from district to district or there were no contracts to guarantee delivery of goods and services on-time and as agreed upon in terms of quantity and quality.

The tendering or bidding process recommended by NIPDEP and the GoM was not always followed and nor was there usually a routine maintenance plan instituted and follow-up evaluation rarely done. In addition, most of the procurement projects did not include the hands-on training for the users before NIPDEP advised them to do so. Consumables, such as paper and toner for copiers, were not thought through and left out of their recurrent budgeting plans.

(2) Recommendations

It is recommended that the districts be provided by the MoE or other appropriate agencies assistance in assessing carefully and systematically procurement needs for their routine administrative needs and for development projects, so that qualitative standards are met for purchased equipment and material and maintenance reinforced.

It would be helpful for the MoE or appropriate GoM agencies to recommend standard procurement contracts and tendering or bidding procedures for the districts to use to ensure that their purchases of goods and services are protected and the money spent is well-targeted, implemented at the lowest cost possible for high cost items, distribution is equitable within a district and follow-up evaluation is conducted. If there are standard forms and procedures already in existence, then the Ministry should make sure that all DEMs have them and that appropriate persons in the district assemblies have them, as well. If training in the use of them is needed, the districts should help organize with the division offices such training.

Under the next project, it might be useful to develop a procurement manual, including forms and standards.

9.3.5 Pilot Project Implementation: Construction

(1) Lessons Learned and Observations

Construction was the major thrust of the pilot project implementation and very much the most complicated part of the NIPDEP effort. The issue of community participation and mobilization was most significant in construction projects and, in fact, required the inculcation a local sense of ownership. This was a major objective of these projects.

The issues related to 1) finding competent and honest contractors, 2) community commitment to provide labor and materials spotty, 3) site selection often a troubling problem because of local politics or unanticipated geographic or geological obstacles, 4) scheduling deadlines often unrealistic and poorly planned, 5) supervision and monitoring inconsistent, 6) on-time and accurate bookkeeping and reporting expenditures, 7) progress often not accurate or on-time, 8) less than adequate coordination between other international partners as to district level initiatives and plans.

TFs were created to do much of the above, but they often did not have the right membership or the members were too strained by other commitments. These problems were not unlike those encountered by anyone attempting construction in Malawi; however, the JICA project, despite them, completed all projects planned throughout the two phases, made effective adjustments to mitigate problems and produced structures which have met quality standards. Maintenance of the structures and sustainability remain issues for further resolution.

(2) Recommendations

GoM and MoE construction projects assisted by international development partners or NGOs should be thoroughly familiar with the lessons learned in NIPDEP and to:

- 1) institute a more thorough and required needs assessment before determining a site or a proposal that would include more accurate demographic data regarding the community and school population to be targeted (using EMIS or school mapping), an assessment of community resources available for mobilization, and a more accurate assessment of community commitment to assisting with the project;
- 2) institute a systematic and regular liaison with other donor partners in the district as to proposed sites, their sources of building materials and labor and other matters which must be coordinated so that there is no costly and needless duplication;
- 3) produce more careful assessments of geographic and geological potential obstacles to a site's selection to avoid overruns on costs or to change sites after construction may have begun;
- 4) develop better district level intra-communications with ground rules between TFs, contractors, outside supervisors, community leaders and all those involved in or have an interest in the construction. These ground rules should be well established and understood at the outset of a project;
- 5) re-examine building specifications to insure that they are clear and simple enough for local and outside contractors to understand and execute them in order to insure that final construction meets standards and the work does not have to be redone after inspection; and

- 6) emphasize those involved in DEP development and in proposal writing to be realistic about the number of projects that can be managed in the JICA time frame, so that projects can be done to high standards and on time.

9.3.6 Importance of Comprehensive Approaches in Education and with Other Sectors

(1) Lessons Learned and Observation

Through the NIPDEP pilot projects, the DPT members learned that to implement effectively combined projects could produce more effective and sustainable impacts than to implement an individual project. A construction project of classroom blocks and teacher's houses is attractive by itself; however, it would not be sustained if it is not combined with a capacity development project in school management, SMC training project and community awareness campaign. Textbooks procurement and teachers' recruitment should be considered, also.

Not only in the education sector, were some collaborative efforts done with other development sectors. For example, the fish pond construction pilot project in Machinga was carried out in collaboration with the fishery sector. The HIV/AIDS awareness campaign project in Thyolo required the information from the health sector. Additionally, the gender awareness campaign project in Mchinji needed the technical assistance from the Ministry of Gender.

Collaboration with the other sectors are sometimes difficult because extra procedures are needed to work with other ministries; however, more interest from the communities and greater impact of the projects should be expected based on the experience of the NIPDEP pilot projects.

(2) Recommendations

To address the educational improvement problems, a comprehensive approach is essential to improve the readiness of children and the parents' and guardians' awareness. At the same time, it is also important to address poverty in the communities to increase access to school and to make the curriculum more practical such as introducing pre vocational subjects.

Safe water supply, agriculture training in school gardens, school health and sanitation, rural electrification, HIV/AIDS prevention are the possible options of the component of multi-sectoral projects for educational development and community empowerment. It is necessary to consider these multi-sectoral projects when updating the DEPs in the next project after NIPDEP.

In addition, the next project should formally invite more agencies related to education development to the Steering Committee and/or the Technical Committee, to promote smoothly collaborative works for the pilot projects by asking them to join NIPDEP at the project formulation workshop.

9.3.7 Coordination and Collaboration with International Development Partners and NGOs

(1) Lessons Learned and Observation

During NSMMP and NIPDEP, the NIPDEP Team tried to promote the collaboration and coordination with other international development partners and NGOs. Some of these efforts

resulted in good collaboration such as with UNICEF in the pit latrine construction pilot projects and with CIDA in the textbook procurement projects; however, the level and the content of the coordination remained superficial. There were still some duplication of the interventions observed in the districts, which should be improved in the next phase.

(2) Recommendations

To maximize the outputs of the limited resources allocation in the country, it is necessary for MoE to coordinate the interventions of the international development partners and NGOs.

The MoE was equipped with the PIF, the National Education Sector Plan, NDEP and DEPs as a policy and guidelines to discuss with donors the coordination of their activities and inputs. More collaborative work should be included in the next phase of NIPDEP; such as EMIS and school census improvement, DEPs updating and marketing, pilot project implementation, capacity development of the MoE and the education officers, and the monitoring and evaluation of programs and/or projects.

The DEPs Marketing Fair at the national level provided a good example of setting up a platform for effective coordination among international development partners and NGOs with the leadership of MoE as well as with the bottom-up approach from the DEM's offices. MoE, in collaboration with the JICA-assisted new project, need to utilize and expand this useful opportunities to disseminate the DEPs and to mobilize and coordinate resources from the donors and NGOs.

9.3.8 Monitoring and Evaluation of DEPs and Development Projects

(1) Lessons Learned and Observation

It was difficult to observe the changes in the capacity among the district officers in DEPs updating because the members were sometimes replaced and because the activities were conducted through group work. Self-evaluation questionnaire survey and observation by the trainers were conducted during the workshop; however it was not good enough to assess their capacity objectively.

As mentioned above, the evaluation of the pilot projects had some difficulties due to the wide distribution of project sites; therefore, the impact on school performance and/or achievements was not fully revealed. There were also some constraints found in design flows and contracted misunderstanding about statistical treatment between NIPDEP, CERT and MIE. The post project impact survey by the DEMs provided good opportunities for them to evaluate the impact of exact target schools and to collect opinions and data from the beneficiaries, which contributed to their capacity improvement in evaluation as well as planning.

(2) Recommendations

Evaluation is an important tool to improve the project activities and outputs as well as for project sustainability. Therefore, the next project after NIPDEP should have an expert on monitoring and evaluation in the education sector, who can join the project occasionally and continually at the very beginning. He or she can contribute the proper designing of the pilot projects planning and the monitoring and evaluation activities, assess the capacity locally to do the research and monitor research outputs at each stage.

MoE has set up a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit under the Planning Department. Under the guidance of the MoE Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Core Trainers and the local specialists (education, construction, facilitation and monitoring), the educational development projects of the next project after NIPDEP should be monitored and evaluated, based on the NIPDEP experience, by the members of the DEM's offices and DAs for their capacity development as well as by the third party to assess the impact and to improve the transparency of the development projects.

At the same time, it is recommended that the process, achievements and impact of the DEPs, NDEP and the National Education Sector Plan are to be assessed by the MoE Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and the Core Trainers. The process and achievements of the DEPs can be evaluated, also, by the DEMs and other DPT members at the annual DEP updating workshop to obtain useful lessons learned and to update DEPs efficiently.

