

DATA-VI

NIPDEP Capacity Building Evaluation Report

**NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM
FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION PLANS
(NIPDEP)**

**NIPDEP CAPACITY
BUILDING
EVALUATION
REPORT**

conducted and reported

by

Communication Development Initiatives (CDI)

for

**KOEI RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KRI) INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Area Development Committees
AECs	Area Education Committees
CDI	Communications Development Initiatives
CDSS	Community Day Secondary Schools
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
DA	District Assembly
DEM	District Education Manager
DC	District Commissioner
DEC	District Executive Committee
DEPs	District Education Plans
DoA	Director of Administration
DoF	Director of Finance
DPD	Director of Planning and Development
DPW	Director of Public Works
INSET	In-Service Training
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KRI	Koei Research Institute
LEA	Local Education Authority
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
NDEP	National District Education Plans
NIPDEP	National Implementation Programme for District Education Plans
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PIF	Policy and Investment Framework
PMT	Project Management team
TF	Task Force
SMC	School Management Committee
TDC	Teachers Development Centre
TOTs	Trainer of Trainers s
TOTs	Trainer of Trainers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. Evaluate the capacity built in the district officers of the six (6) pilot education districts through the pilot project implementation and the DEP updating;
2. Evaluate capacity built in the members of the Project Management Team (PMT) and Task Forces (TF) of the six pilot education districts through the pilot project implementation;
3. Evaluate capacity built in the district planning teams of the 27 non-pilot education districts through DEPs updating; and
4. Evaluate capacity built in the core trainers' team through planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of the NIPDEP activities.

1.3. Methodology

This report is based on a self-evaluation questionnaire, which were administered three times to members of either the PMT or TF in the six pilot districts and to DPD, DEM, CPEA, DoF and/or their representatives in the non-pilot districts.

Overall the questionnaire addresses 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 selection of a sample of non-pilot districts during the first follow up process (after the DEP updating exercise) and the final follow up was based on the following criteria:

- a) Post-assessment of the draft DEPs which gave an indication of whether a DEP was "below expectation", "average" or "above";
- b) Geographical location as per administrative region and location in terms of upper-land versus lakeshore districts rather than education division since the decentralization process was taking place in all districts in Malawi.

The essence was to try to make the sample representative of country rather than the division because the bottom line was that the exercise covered the whole nation; and

- c) Ten percent minimum sample size of the districts which were involved in the exercise. Thus the number of districts chosen was based on the total of 27 non-pilot districts thereafter determining the sample size. This should be seen in terms of equal representation of persons engaged in the exercise as four from each district.

The non-pilot districts which were included in the survey after the preliminary phase are: Rumphu and Mzuzu city in the north, Lilongwe Rural East and Lilongwe City, Nkhotakota, Salima in the centre, Balaka, Zomba Urban, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural and Mwanza.

Assumptions and Limitations

In carrying out this study it has been assumed that:

1. Members of the PMT and TF had some understanding of the education background of their respective district. Hence, although the questionnaire was administered after inception of the projects, the respondents would still provide the appropriate background of the situation before the project;
2. Views of the PMT chairperson treasurer and secretary would not warrant much difference on the findings. However, the observations of these three persons were not completely ruled out because in some cases they had a better background of the education system; and
3. The findings would be helpful in both determining the attitude of PMT and TF members towards changing education development and how the entire project could be of help in capacity development.

Just as there are assumptions, there are limitations to this study; namely:

1. The questionnaire was not intended to be for a selected sample although it was not categorically defined to cover all members of district teams (PMTs and TFs). Hence, in some cases not all members responded to the questionnaire whereas in others everyone did respond;
2. Biases were inevitable in processes of responding due to respondents' literacy levels, working background and experience. However, this would be minimized by aggregating the responses rather than analysing such responses from an individual perspective;

3. The analyses is largely based on attitudinal factors rather than facts therefore it is bound to contain biases;
4. Only simple statistical analyses are applied largely in terms of percentages and graphs; and
5. The questionnaire was not sampled. However, it was verified by a team of experts from the project and was adopted and adapted from tested questionnaire. Hence its validity and reliability can not be ruled out completely;
6. It was not possible to visit all the non-pilot districts due to financial limitations; hence only eleven (11) districts were randomly chosen as representative of the 27 non-pilot districts.

1.5. Significance of the Evaluation

This evaluation is important in:

1. Measuring the output and outcome of 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 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 on aggregate the evaluation offers us a chance to determine what and how capacity development can be advanced in Malawi with respect to project management and implementation. Besides, the research provides the overseers of the project insights of what can be done to make the management and implementation process a success.

Lessons learnt

- (1) The emphasis on hands on learning with aspects and documents which spiced the training, as theory, proved beneficial because the trainees gained confidence in whatever they were doing;
- (2) The use of core trainers and national trainers under PMT (largely the DEM) was practical because it minimized time wastage in a number of cases;
- (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;
- (4) Continuity of the same personnel in reviewing and updating DEPs and

implementing them is critical if capacity building is to be fully realized;

- (5) Limiting trainees to those directly in district education activities reinforced the possibility of updating the content in the context of local needs and bringing forth ownership of the DEPs. The continued pairing of DEM and DA proved useful and fruitful because the two complemented each other in understanding education and financial issues;
- (6) Training materials should address key areas that will be practiced comprehensively and should be, as much as possible, in a written format as handouts; and
- (7) There is need for a capacity building evaluation mechanism to try to be comprehensive when addressing issues that are not confined/controlled.

4.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the capacity building evaluation:

- (1) The capacity development (training) which this project followed, like any other training intended to promote decentralization, should be directly linked with other institutional training strategies or a national one;
- (2) Continuation of formatted materials and use of practical lessons such as pilot projects should be the order of the day in all capacity development projects because they drastically improve understanding and have a likelihood of giving high returns to skill acquisition and its retention;
- (3) The core trainers, as trainers of trainees, should be actively involved in training by being part of a monitoring/evaluation team; and
- (4) A more comprehensive method of evaluating capacity building should be advanced.

Conclusion

The evaluation of capacity building has shown us, an apparent indication, that the NIPDEP project partially fulfilled its mandate of capacity development. However, it has also shown us that the full picture of such capacity building to be fully revealed there was need for a more comprehensive survey which should have looked at other intervening factors in addition to systematic observations of the ex-participants.

CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND

1.0. Introduction

In collaboration with JICA through Koei Research Institute (KRI), the Ministry of Education (MoE) has been conducting the National Implementation Programme for District Education Plans (NIPDEP). NIPDEP is regarded as Phase II of the National School Mapping and Micro Planning Project since January 2000. KRI has set a NIPDEP study team which is working closely with the MoE. NIPDEP activities started in January 2003.

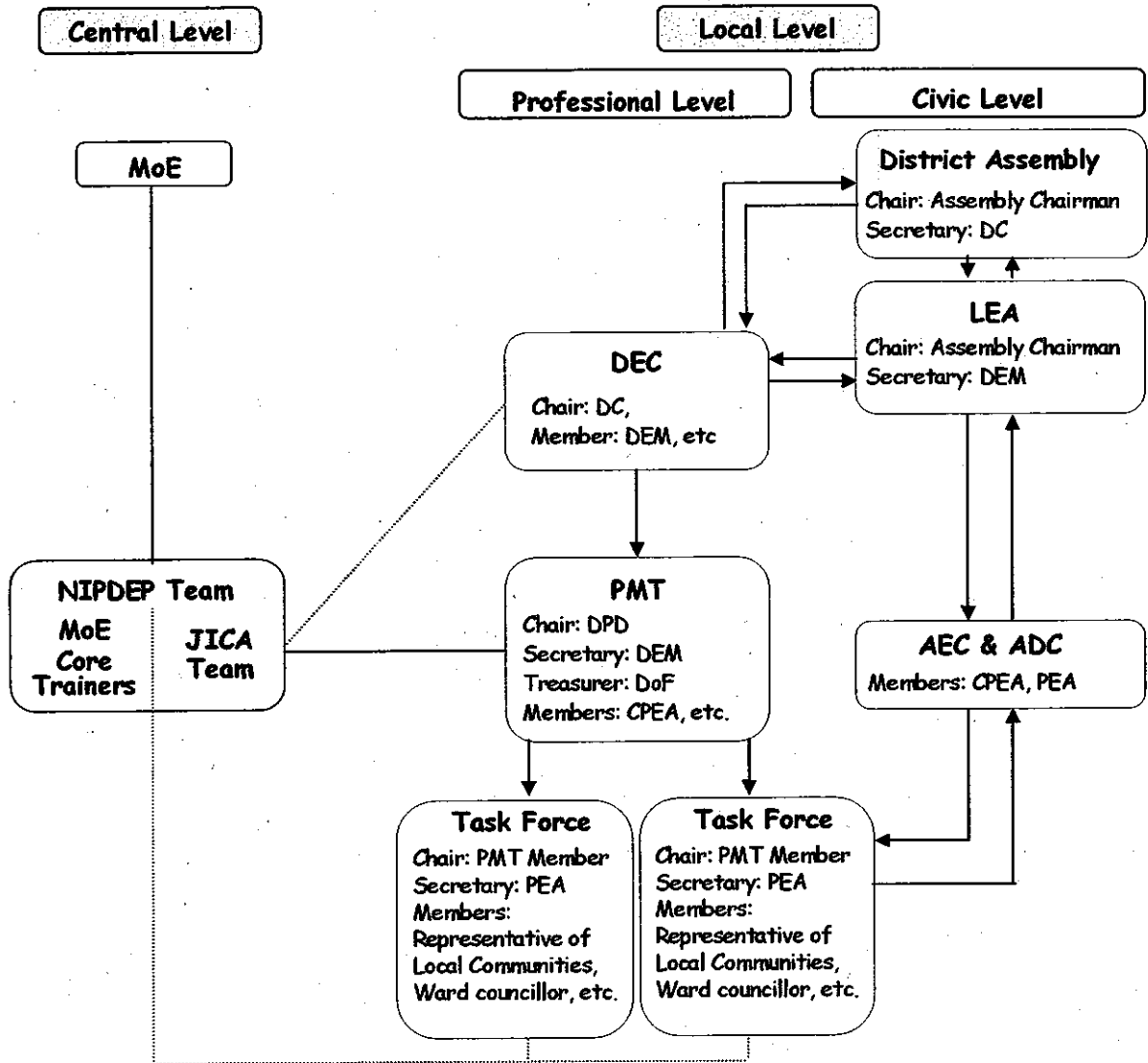
In a nutshell NIPDEP study has a central office which works closely with the Planning Department of MoE, core trainers (division planners) based in the six education divisions and Project Management Teams (PMTs) and Task Forces (TFs) based in each of the six pilot districts. The number of Task Forces is subject to number of projects in each district. The number of projects range between six and eight in each district. These projects can be categorized in terms of training/awareness, procurement and construction.

The Project Management Team (PMT) is a group of twelve to thirteen people who are local professionals, political and community leaders. The PMT is technically created by the DEC [District Executive Committee], which has its authority from the District Assembly (DA). The DEC has a direct legal relationship, as well, to the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) down to the Area Education Committees (AECs). The PMTs relate directly to NIPDEP team composed of MoE core trainers and the JICA Study Team. The PMT members are expected to contribute positively towards any given project. For example, although NIPDEP project is in essence an education one, it has complementary activities which would require the expertise of water, community development and health personnel. Besides, if construction is to be concluded positively there is need for the Director of Public Works and his/her staff to assist with the technical know how which is non existent at the district education office.

The NIPDEP team, in turn reports to MoE at the central level. Each pilot project in a district has a Task Force (TF) of approximately six to eight members. The members for these projects are chosen by the PMT. These TFs are composed of various members with diverse backgrounds. However, the key personnel in the task forces are education officers and direct stakeholder, such as school committee members and community leaders.

The operational structure of this programme is illustrated in Figure 1 below. It shows that there are different roles at the national and local levels in the NIPDEP Project played by the NIPDEP Team, the MoE, the DA Local Education Authority (LEA), District Executive Committee, Project Management Team (PMT) Area Education Committee (AEC), School Management Committees, Area Development Committee (ADC), and Pilot Project Task Forces, here after referred to as Task Force. Furthermore, Figure 1 illustrates the lines of authority and complexity of relationships necessary to implement the project, so that there is accountability, transparency, coordination and community involvement.

Figure 1: NIPDEP OPERATIONAL/IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE



The membership of the PMT has three set positions and the rest are filled by nomination. The set positions of PMT members are Chairperson (Director of Planning and Development – DPD or Director of Administration – DoA), Treasurer (Director of Finance) and Secretary (District Education Manager). The Task Force has the following set positions:

- Chairperson from PMT
- Secretary – PEA
- Treasurer – a person with book-keeping experience and background

- One person in the district with expertise and background related to the task force TOR. If construction, person should have experience with school construction and be located near the construction sites
- Two persons from a School Management Committee, preferably the chairperson, who is directly involved or participates in the project under the task force's responsibility. If construction, there should be one School Committee chairperson on the task force for each construction site
- One person from the district representing an AEC or ADC

The objectives of NIPDEP are to:

1. establish and strengthen implementation mechanism of DEPs, which were prepared during the national School Mapping and Micro-Planning Project; and
2. build capacity in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DEPs and the related educational projects arising from the central and local education offices in the context of the Government Decentralization Policy (1998). The direct target groups of the capacity building are:
 - counterparts (officers of MoE)
 - core trainers (division planners)
 - District Education Managers - DEM, Coordinating Primary Education Advisors - CPEA, Director of Planning and Development - DPD and Director of Finance - DoF of the pilot districts, and
 - DEM, CPEA, DPD and DoF of Non -Pilot districts.

The approaches have been advanced to meet the above objectives, namely:

1. utilize further, revise and update the DEPs;
2. formulate the National District Education Plan (NDEP), which stipulates an overall scenario for implementing all of the District Education Plans (DEPs), based on Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (MPRSP), Education Policy and Investment Framework (PIF), Sector Development Plan and the DEPS; and
3. plan, implement, monitor and evaluate pilot projects in the pilot districts to experience the actual implementation process of the DEPs and to learn lessons for upgrading DEPs and formulating NDEP.

1.1. Major Activities and Schedule under NIPDEP

The following were the major capacity building activities, as direct and/or indirect training workshops, and their schedules conducted during the NIPDEP program

Table 1-1: List of workshops and dates

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 - In three 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 pilot districts	June 2004
(16) Updating DEPs 3 batches – South, Central and North, and pilot districts	August and 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 – national level	August 2005
(21) DEP market fair for all education districts – division level	August 2005

Separate workshops were conducted to develop capacity for Directors of Public Works (DPWs) and their immediate officers (works supervisors and/or building foremen) who in most cases were also Task Force members under 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.

As per expected program, the activities were disseminated through prepared and formatted 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 District Education Plans and related inputs (data); and
5. Marketing of DEPs.

1.2. Objectives of the Research

As stated under the background section above that one of the major aims of NIPDEP Pilot Project is to build/develop capacity in planning, implementation and monitoring of the education projects at the district level (Nsanje, Thyolo, Machinga, Mchinji, Ntchisi and Nkhata Bay) in line with decentralization, this research intended to:

1. Evaluate the capacity built in the district officers of the six (6) pilot education districts through the pilot project implementation and the DEP updating;
2. Evaluate capacity built in the members of the Project Management Team (PMT) and Task Forces (TF) of the six pilot education districts through the pilot project implementation;
3. Evaluate capacity built in the district planning teams of the 27 non-pilot education districts through DEPs updating; and
4. Evaluate capacity built in the core trainers' team through planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of the NIPDEP activities.

1.3. Methodology

This report is based on a self-evaluation questionnaire (pre and post) (see Appendix 1) which were administered to members of either the PMT or TF in the six pilot districts and to DPD, DEM, CPEA, DoF and/or their representatives in the non-pilot districts. The pre-self-evaluation questionnaires were administered in person during the kick off workshop for pilot districts at district level and during the course of updating the District Education Plans for non-pilot districts.

Overall the questionnaire addresses 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 was applicable to the three broad areas of intervention (training, procurement and construction) has both closed and open ended question. Besides there was no attempt to administer the questionnaire separately for the three areas although this can easily be done because the responses are expected to be grouped mainly in terms of task forces.

The selection of non-pilot districts during the first follow up process (after the DEP updating exercise) and the second final follow up was based on the following criteria:

- a) Post-assessment of the draft DEPs which gave an indication of whether a DEP was "below expectation", "average" or "above";
- b) Geographical location as per administrative region and location in terms of upper-land versus lakeshore districts rather than education division since the decentralization process was taking place in all districts in Malawi. The essence was to try to make the sample representative of country rather than the division because the bottom line was that the exercise covered the whole nation; and
- c) Ten percent minimum sample size of the districts which were involved in the exercise. Thus the number of districts chosen was based on the total of 27 non-pilot districts thereafter determining the sample size. This should be seen in terms of equal representation of persons engaged in the exercise as four from each district.

The non-pilot districts that were included in the survey after the preliminary phase are: Rumphi and Mzuzu city in the North, Lilongwe Rural East and Lilongwe City, Nkhotakota, Salima in the Centre, and Balaka, Zomba Urban, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural and Mwanza in the South.

The survey was expected to interview the persons who attended the updating workshop. In essence, it was expected that a minimum of 44 persons and maximum of sixty six (66) will respond to the questionnaire/interview to each of the two follow-ups of the non-pilot districts.

1.4. Assumptions and Limitations

In carrying out this study it has been assumed that:

1. Members of the PMT and TF had some understanding of the education background of their respective district. Hence, although the questionnaire was administered after inception of the projects, the respondents would still provide the appropriate background of the situation before the project;
2. Views of the PMT chairperson, treasurer and secretary would not warrant much difference on the findings. However, the observations of these three persons were not completely ruled out because in some cases they had a better background of the education system; and
3. The findings would be helpful in both determining the attitude of PMT and TF members towards changing education development and how the entire project could be of help in capacity development.

Just as there were assumptions, there were limitations to this study; namely:

1. The questionnaire was not intended to be for a selected sample although it was not categorically defined to cover all members of district teams (PMTs and TFs). Hence, in some cases not all members responded to the questionnaire whereas in others everyone did respond;
2. Biases were inevitable in processes of responding due to respondents' literacy levels, working background and experience. However, this would be minimized by aggregating the responses rather than analysing such responses from an individual perspective;
3. The analyses was largely based on attitudinal factors rather than factors that may be taken as objective; therefore, it was bound to contain biases;
4. Only simple statistical analyses were applied largely in terms of percentages;
5. The questionnaire was not sampled. However, it was verified by a team of experts from the project and was adopted and adapted from tested questionnaire. Hence its validity and reliability can not be ruled out completely; and
6. It was not possible to visit all the non-pilot districts due to financial limitations; hence only eleven (11) districts were randomly chosen as representative of the 27 non-pilot districts.

1.5. Significance of the Evaluation

This evaluation is important in:

1. Measuring the output and outcome of 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 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 on aggregate the evaluation offered us a chance to determine what and how capacity development can be advanced in Malawi with respect to project management and implementation. Besides, the research provided the overseers of the project insights of what could be done to make the management and implementation process a success.

1.6. Coverage of the Evaluation Report

This survey report has been presented in three chapters, namely, introduction, results and analyses, discussion and conclusion. The introduction highlights the background of the survey, methodology, assumption and limitations and significance and describes the PMT and TF. The results and analyses dwell on management capabilities in general and specifically on procurement, service improvements, development projects, implementation of In-Service Training (INSET), detailed planning, project implementation and management and education plan preparation, updating and marketing. The report ends with a conclusion which states lessons learnt, recommendation and final remarks.

CHAPTER II: FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

2.0. Introduction

As stated in the introduction on target groups, both pilot and non-pilot districts were part of the evaluation exercise. The responses from these two groups were tabulated and presented as findings of the evaluation in terms of capacity building under and through DEP updating for all districts and capacity building in pilot projects. The DEP updating and capacity building process tried also to take into account the work environment by evaluating randomly selected ex-participants from non-pilot districts whilst in their respective work stations four months and seven months after the DEP updating.

The presentation of findings on capacity building has been separated mainly into two parts, namely Pilot Projects and Updating of the DEPs. Whereas the pilot projects represent a focus on only pilot district personnel, the DEP updating findings cover both the pilot and non-pilot district results though separated in presentation for ease understanding and comparison. On a small but significant scale results of the capacity building of core trainers (division education planners) have been presented.

The results from both the pilot and non pilot districts at the three intervals preliminary, first follow and final follow-up showed that the persons who responded fell short of the maximum (see Table 2-1).

Table 2-1: Expected and actual persons responding to the questionnaires

District	Surveys	Expected persons	Actual persons
Pilot districts	Preliminary	359	109
	First follow up	24 (sampled)	20
	Final follow-up	359	149
	Sub total	742	278
Non-pilot districts	Preliminary	132	87
	First follow up	44 (minimum sample)	38
	Final follow-up	44(minimum sample)	47
	Sub total	220	172
Grand total		962	450

The actual number was significantly lower than expected numbers partly due to death and transfers apart from the obvious cause non-response and carrying out the exercise on a day when some participants are not within reach or "busy".

Result of the Pilot Districts

2.1.1 Results of the Preliminary Survey

The results of the pilot districts are presented in terms of key responses in the following areas: management capabilities, procurement, service improvement, district development projects, implementation of In-Service Training, detailed planning, and capacity in project implementation.

i). Management Capabilities

A General project management capability by PMT members/district

A total of 81 members responded to the questionnaire. The majority (20 respondents) came from Mchinji District while the least number of members responding came from Nsanje District (5). Eighteen (18) respondents came from Thyolo while Machinga, Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi had 13 respondents each.

The results showed that data collection and management greatly improved in Thyolo District and to a greater extent in Mchinji District. However, there was no improvement or poor improvement in Nkhata Bay District. On planning, Thyolo and Mchinji districts had the greatest improvement of 4.9 percent while Nkhata Bay indicated the least improvement of 2.5 percent. In terms of project implementation, Mchinji and to a lesser extent Nkhata Bay had the greatest improvement although Nkhata Bay had also the highest percentage of people saying project implementation had not improved. Machinga and Thyolo had 9.9 percent of the PMT members saying that project implementation was good. On monitoring, the highest percentage of PMT members saying that monitoring had greatly improved came from Thyolo (4.9 percent) and Ntchisi (3.7 percent). However Ntchisi had also the highest percent of members saying that monitoring had not improved. Machinga, Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi districts showed that budgeting and financial management had greatly improved with 3.7 percent each. However Nkhata Bay had also the highest percent of members indicating that there was no improvement. Mchinji indicated that financial management was good with 14.8 percent. Thyolo had the highest percentage of PMT members (8.6) who said that evaluation of output and outcomes had greatly improved while Mchinji indicated that it was good with 13.6 percent. Machinga indicated that it was poor with 2.5 percent.

The highest percent of members saying that facilitation and coordination had greatly improved came from Mchinji District while Machinga and Ntchisi indicated that it was good with 9.9 percent. Nkhata Bay showed that there was no improvement on facilitation and coordination with 2.5 percent. Sixteen percent of the PMT members from Thyolo indicated that sensitization and mobilisation of community members was good while 6.2 percent of Mchinji PMT members indicated that it had greatly improved. Nkhata Bay District indicated that there was no improvement with 2.5 percent. Mchinji and Thyolo had the highest percent of PMT members indicating that report preparation had greatly

improved with 9.9 percent while 1.2 percent of Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi respondents indicated that there was no improvement.

In conclusion, Table 2-2 below summarizes the aggregate level of improvement that was observed under General Project Management Capability by PMT members and district. In essence Table 2-2 shows that overall there was much improvement of general management capabilities in all districts.

Table 2-2: Percentage scores on improvement of general management capabilities

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly improved
1. Data collection and management	6.2	3.7	23.5	42.0	24.7
2. Planning	4.9	2.5	22.2	56.8	13.6
3. Implementation	6.2	6.2	23.5	45.7	18.5
4. Monitoring	7.2	6.2	25.9	44.4	16.0
5. Budgeting and financial management	3.7	1.2	37.0	42.0	16.0
6. Evaluation of outputs and outcomes	4.9	2.5	23.5	49.4	19.8
7. Facilitation and coordination	3.7	2.5	23.5	43.2	27.2
8. Sensitization and mobilization of community members	4.9	4.9	25.9	49.4	14.8
9. Report preparation	2.5	0	18.5	49.4	29.6

B: General project management capability by Task Forces group

In terms of all districts, the highest percent indicating that data collection and management had greatly improved was 12.3 percent. 8.6 percent of the task force members stated that improvement was good. However there was a significant number who showed that there was no improvement in data collection and management. 7.4 percent of task force members stated that planning had greatly improved while 3.7 percent indicated that there was no improvement in planning. The highest percent of Task Force members indicating that project implementation was good was 8.6 percent whereas 3.7 percent stated that there was no improvement in project implementation. Most task forces stated that monitoring had greatly improved although there were some who felt that there was no improvement. 12.8 percent of all task force members indicated that budgeting and financing had greatly improved in their respective projects during the project period from phase I.

There were some task force members who felt that the evaluation of outputs and outcomes, facilitation and coordination had greatly improved while very few members indicated that there was no improvement. 11.1 percent of task force members stated that sensitization and mobilization of community members was good. However, 3.7 percent of the task force members indicated that there was no improvement. On report preparation 11.1 percent stated that there was great improvement but 2.5 percent indicated that there was no improvement.

ii). Capacity Improvement in Procurement

A Overall District Implementation of Procurement

A total of 99 persons responded from the 6 districts on implementation of procurement. Mchinji had 27 persons, Machinga 22 persons, Thyolo and Nkhata Bay 17 persons, Ntchisi 14 persons and Nsanje 2 persons.

In terms of needs assessment, 26.3 percent of the 99 people from the district said that it was excellent. However only 6 of the 27 persons from Mchinji said it was excellent. The majority of the people (36) said that implementation of procurement was good. While 4 percent said there was no skill and another 12.1 percent said that needs assessment was poor. 3.0 percent of the members from Machinga, Mchinji and Thyolo indicated that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent while Machinga also said it was good with 11 percent. Mchinji and Ntchisi had the highest percent (3.0 percent) saying there was no skill and Nkhata Bay had the highest percent saying it was poor. Mchinji had the highest percent of the members saying that bidding and selection of suppliers was excellent with 9.1 percent and good with 12.1 percent while Nkhata Bay had the highest percent saying it was poor with 2.0 percent. The highest percent of members saying that it was excellent came from Mchinji with 6.1 percent while Ntchisi and Thyolo said it was poor with 2.0 percent each. Members from Mchinji, Machinga and Nkhata Bay indicated that follow up and evaluation was good with 10.1 percent and 9.1 percent each respectively. However Mchinji which also had the highest percent indicated that there was no skill from 4.0 percent of the respondents.

B PMT member implementation of procurement by district

A total of 87 PMT members responded from all the districts. The highest number (23) came from Mchinji district, while only 1 person responded from Nsanje, Machinga had 19, Nkhata Bay 17, Thyolo 15 and Ntchisi 12. On aggregate the responses ranged between 6.0 and 39.1 percent. Most of the respondents indicated that they had seen good improvement in terms of procurement. Very few were below average in terms of improved capacity building (see Table 2-3 below). It is interesting that the task forces and the overall district teams have the same score.

Table 2-3: Percentage scores on improvement of procurement capabilities

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly improved
1. PMT members implementation	6.0	8.0	29.4	39.1	17.5
2. Task force implementation	6.1	8.1	29.1	38.8	18.0
3. District implementation	6.1	8.1	29.1	38.8	18.0

In line with the summary of findings on improving procurement presented in Table 2-2 on page 11 above, the needs assessment showed that a quarter of the members said that PMT member implementation of procurement was excellent. While another 37.9 percent

said that it was good. Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi had 2 and 1 persons respectively who said that there was no skill imparted or acquired. A total of 12.6 percent of the PMT members said that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent while another 31.0 percent said that it was good. A significant number of people (19.2 percent) said that there was no skill imparted on selection of schools and site survey, while another 12.6 percent said that it was poor. The highest percentage (34.5) said that it was average. In terms of bidding and selection of suppliers, 35.6 percent of the PMT members said it was good with another 25.3 percent saying that it was excellent and these came from Mchinji. Only 3.4 percent said there was no skill while 4.6 percent said it was poor. On community mobilization, 50.0 percent of the PMT members from the districts said that it was good. Again the majority (12) came from Mchinji. Another 13.8 percent said that community mobilisation was excellent. Only 3.4 percent said there was no skill while 6.9 percent said it was poor. Finally, the assessment of PMT members showed that follow-up and evaluation was not done properly by the district, this is because only 10.3 percent said it was excellent while another 10.3 percent said there was no skill. A total of 30 percent said that it was average.

C Task Force Implementation of Procurement

1) Nsanje

The highest number of respondents came from Task Force 5 (22.0 percent) followed by 6, 1 and 2 (15.0 percent each) and Task Force 3 (14.0 percent). The number of people responding to Task Force implementation of procurement, which was the same as that of district members (26.3 percent), said that Task Force implementation of procurement was excellent while another 36.4 percent said it was good. Only 4.0 percent said there was no skill for Task Force implementation of procurement. Another 12.1 percent said that needs assessment for Task Force implementation of procurement was poor. In terms of selection of target schools and site survey, only 12.1 percent said that it was excellent. Nobody from task forces 4, 6, 7 said that it was excellent. More people (34) said that it was average. But a total of 9.1 percent said that there was no skill in the selection of target schools. Two people from Task Force 5 said that selection of schools was good. Only 4 people from Task Force 1 said that there was no skill for bidding and selection of suppliers. Another 4 people from Task Forces 4, 6 and 8 said that bidding and selection of suppliers was poor. A total of 37 people said that bidding and selection of suppliers was good while another 25 said it was excellent. Out of the 48 people, 11 came from Task Force number 5. The highest number of respondents (48) said that community mobilisation was good with another 14 saying it was excellent. Only 4 percent said that there was no skill for community mobilisation. In term of follow-up and evaluation 9 people said there was no skill and another 6 said it was poor. Most of the members (38), said that follow up and evaluation was good with another 12 saying it was excellent. 34.3 percent said that follow-up and evaluation was average. On aggregate, it is apparent that capacity building was taking place in Nsanje.

2) Thyolo

A total of 17 members responded to the questionnaire. Out of these a high percent of members 17.6 percent said Task Force implementation of procurement was excellent and these came from Task Force number 5. A high percent of members from Task Force number 1 said that it was good with 11.8 percent while only Task Force number 5 members said that it was poor with 5.9 percent. Members from Task Force 3, 5 and 8 said that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent, each with 5.9 percent while Task Force number 6 said it was good with 17.6 percent. Only Task Force number 5 indicated that there was no skill with 5.9 percent. Highest percent (17.6) came from Task Force number 5 members saying that bidding and selection of suppliers was excellent while 11.8 percent of Task Force members from Task Force 2 and 4 indicated that it was good and members from Task Force 1 and 6 indicated that it was average. Only members from Task Force number 4 indicated that community mobilisation was excellent with 5.9 percent while members from Task Forces 4 and 5 indicated that it was good with 11.8 percent each. However, members from Task Forces 2 and 5 indicated that it was poor with 5.9 percent each. Members from Task Forces 3 and 5 said that follow-up and evaluation was excellent with 5.9 percent while Task Forces 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 indicated that it was good with also 5.9 percent. However Task Force 6 members also said it was poor with 5.9 percent. Overall, the majority of those interviewed in Thyolo felt that capacity building was on course.

3) Machinga Project

A total of 22 members responded to the questionnaire. On needs assessment, only Task Force 2 members indicated that needs assessment was excellent with 2 and 3 members indicated that it was good with 9.1 percent. Another 9.1 percent from Task Force 6 said it was average while 9.1 percent members from Task Force 3 and 8 said needs assessment was poor in Machinga's pilot projects. Members from Task Force 2 said that selection of target schools and site survey in Machinga's project was excellent with 9.1 percent while Task Force 7 said it was good with 13.6 percent. Only Task Force 6 members said it was poor with 4.5 percent. In terms of bidding and selection of suppliers, members from Task Forces 2, 4 and 6 said it was excellent with 4.5 percent each while Task Force members from 5, 6 and 7 said it was good with 9.1 percent. Only Task Force 8 members said that bidding and selection of suppliers was poor with 4.5 percent. In terms of community mobilisation, members from Task Forces 2 and 4 said that it was excellent with 4.5 percent while members from Task Forces 3 and 6 said it was good with 13.6 percent. Only Task Force 8 members said community mobilisation was poor with 4.5 percent. Task Force members from 2, 3 and 4 said that follow-up and evaluation in the Machinga projects was excellent with 4.5 percent while members from Task Forces 3, 5 and 6 said that it was average. Only members from Task Force 8 said that it was poor with 4.5 percent. Overall, the respondents felt that capacity building was taking place in the district.

4) Mchinji Project

Out of the 27 respondents in Mchinji district, 2 members from Task Force number 6 said that needs assessment of Task Force implementation of procurement was excellent with 7.4 percent. Task Force number 5 had 22.2 percent of its members saying that needs assessment was good while members from Task Forces 3 and 6 said that it was poor with 3.7 percent. 7.4 percent of the members from Task Force 2 said that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent while 14.8 percent of the Task Force 5 members said that it was good. Task Force members from 2, 3 and 4 indicated no skill acquisition while 2, 3 and 6 also indicated that it was poor. Members from Task Force 5 indicated that bidding and selection of suppliers was excellent with 14.8 percent and members from 1 and 2 said it was good with 11.1 percent. Only Task Force 6 members said that it was poor with 3.7 percent. The highest percent (11.1) of members saying that community mobilisation was excellent came from Task Force 5 while Task Forces 2 and 5 said that it was good with 11.5 percent. Task Forces 1 and 3 said it was average with 7.4 percent and only Task Force 6 said it was poor. In terms of follow-up and evaluation, members from Task Force 6 had the highest percent saying that it was excellent while a greater percent (22.2) came from Task Force 5 saying that it was good. Members from Task Forces 2 and 6 indicated that it was poor with 3.7 percent each, while Task Force 3 had the highest percent saying that there was no skill with 7.4 percent. Although the number of persons saying that there was no skill acquisition cannot be overlooked, the majority of the respondents stated that they had acquired skills through NIPDEP.

5) Ntchisi

In Ntchisi, members from Task Forces 3 and 5 had the highest percent of members saying that needs assessment of Task Force implementation of procurement was excellent with 14.3 percent each. While Task Force 6 said it was good with the same 14.3 percent. Task Force 1 members indicated no skill with the same percent of 14.3 percent. Only Task Force number 3 members from Ntchisi indicated that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent with 7.1 percent while Task Force number 5 members said that it was good with 14.4 percent. Members from Task Forces 2, 3 and 4 indicated that it was poor with 7.1 percent while Task Force 1 indicated no skill acquisition in the selection of target schools and site survey with 21.4 percent. Members from Task Force 1 said that there was no skill in bidding and selection of suppliers with 14.3 percent while Task Force 3 said it was excellent with also 14.3 percent. Task Force 5 members had the highest percent saying that it was good while Task Forces 1, 3 and 4 also said it was good with 7 percent each. Members from Task Forces 1 and 3 said that community mobilisation was excellent with 7.1 percent even though Task Force 1 also indicated that it was poor with 7.1 percent and no skill with 14.3 percent. The highest percent of members saying that it was goods came from Task Force 5 with 14.3 percent while Task Forces 2 and 3 also said it was good with 7.1 percent. Only Members from Task Force 1 indicated that follow-up and evaluation was poor and there was no skill with 14.3 percent while Task Forces 3 and 5 said that it was good with 14.3 percent each. Although Task Force 1 had apparent problems in specific areas to acquire skills such as selection of

target schools, site survey and selection of suppliers, the majority felt that they had acquired the expected skills on average.

6) Nkhata Bay

In terms of needs assessment, members from Task Force 5 had the highest percent saying that need assessment was excellent with 23.5 percent while Task Forces 5 and 3 members also said it was good with 5.9 percent. Only Task Force 1 members said that it was poor with 5.9 percent and there was no skill with 11.8 percent. Members from Task Force 5 said that selection of target schools and site survey was excellent with 11.8 percent and good with the same percent. While Task Force 3 members said it was average with 11.8 percent and Task Forces 2, 3, 5 and 6 said it was poor with 5.9 percent each. Most members indicated that bidding and selection of suppliers was excellent with Task Force 5 having the highest percent of 17.6 while Task Forces 2, 3 and 4 had 5.9 percent each. 4 task forces out of the 6 said that it was good with the highest percent coming from Task Force 5 and Task Force 1 indicated no skill in bidding and selection of suppliers with 11.8 percent. Most task force members said follow-up and evaluation was good with highest percent (17.6) coming from Task Force 5. Two of the task forces said it was excellent with 5.9 percent each while Task Force 1 indicated no skill with 11.8 percent. On aggregate, the respondents felt that skills were acquired although a significant number of these respondents, mainly from Task Force 1 felt that skill acquisition for site selection and site survey was poor.

iii). Service Improvement

On aggregate the situation in all pilot districts show that most of the capacity for service improvement was largely above average. However, a significant group was average in terms of district service by the district personnel in general regardless of ones involvement in NIPDEP (PMT and/or TF) or not (see Table 2-4 below).

Table 2-4: Average percent score for education service improvement

Evaluated/Assessed Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly improved
1. Service improvement by PMT	1.9	1.8	24.9	46.3	25.1
2. Service improvement by Task Force	1.8	1.7	23.4	44.9	28.3
3. Service improvement by district	1.8	1.7	23.4	44.9	28.3

For each of the summed up results in Table 2-4, detailed results are stipulated below in terms of PMT, TF and overall district. These aggregated responses were from 98 people.

A Overall District Education Services Improvement by District

Members from Thyolo district said supervision and coordination by DEMs office had greatly improved with 9.2 percent. Mchinji said that it was good with 14.3 percent while only 2.0 percent from Nsanje said that it was good. Members from Machinga said it was

poor with 1.0 percent while Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi said there was no improvement with 1 percent each and Mchinji said that it was poor with 2.0 percent. Mchinji members said supervision by PEAs had greatly improved with 8.2 percent while Mchinji, Ntchisi, Thyolo and Machinga said it was good. Districts like Nkhata Bay, Nsanje, Ntchisi and Thyolo said supervision was poor with 1 percent each while Nkhata Bay also said there was no improvement with 1.0 percent. Mchinji and Nsanje members said that school committee involvement in school management had greatly improved with 4.1 percent each while Mchinji and Thyolo members said it was good with 15.3 percent and 10.2 percent respectively. Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi said there was no improvement with 1.0 percent each.

Thyolo and Mchinji members said communication between stakeholders and district had greatly improved with 7.1 percent and 5.1 percent respectively. Machinga, Mchinji and Thyolo also indicated that it was good while Nkhata Bay said there was no improvement with 1 percent. Thyolo, Mchinji and Nkhata Bay members said that communication between schools and zones had greatly improved with 7.1 percent; 6.1 percent; and 6.1 percent respectively. Mchinji and Thyolo said that it was good with 15.3 percent and 11.2 percent respectively. Nkhata Bay said that there was no improvement with 1.0 percent. Members from Machinga and Thyolo said that communication between zones and district had greatly improved with 7.1 percent and 6.1 percent respectively; Mchinji and Thyolo said that it was good with 13.3 percent each; Nsanje said it was poor with 1.0 percent and Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi said there was no improvement. Members from Thyolo and Mchinji said communication between district and division had greatly improved with 7.1 percent each while Mchinji, Ntchisi and Thyolo said it was good with 9.2 percent, 8.2 percent and 8.2 percent respectively. Members from Machinga, Mchinji, Ntchisi and Thyolo also had a small percent saying communication was poor. In terms of communication between district and ministry headquarters, Machinga, Mchinji and Thyolo said it had greatly improved with 8.2 percent each while Ntchisi said it was poor with 1 percent and Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi said there was no improvement with 1.0 percent and 2.0 percent respectively. Members from Mchinji and Thyolo said that communication between DEM and DA had greatly improved with 12.2 percent and 10.2 percent respectively; Ntchisi and Mchinji said it was good with 9.2 percent each; Mchinji also said it was poor with 1.0 percent and Nkhata Bay said there was no improvement with 1.0 percent.

B District Education Services Improvement by PMT member

A total of 98 people responded to the question on service improvement by PMT members. In terms of supervision and coordination by DEMs' office, 28.6 percent of the members said that it had greatly improved while 2.0 percent of PMT secretaries and 1.0 percent PMT chairpersons also said it had greatly improved. A high percent of PMT members (41.8 percent) said supervision and coordination was good while 5.1 percent of the secretaries also said that it was good. 1.0 percent of the all members said that it was poor just as another 1 percent of the treasurers said that there was no improvement. PMT members said that information flow to and from DEM's office had greatly improved by 20.4 percent while 34.7 of the same group said that it was good. PMT Chairpersons said

it was good by 3.1 percent while secretaries and treasurer's also said it was good by 5.1 and 1.0 percent respectively. However PMT members also said it was poor with 2.0 percent while secretaries said it was poor with 1.0 percent. 2.0 percent of the chairpersons said that supervision by PEAs had greatly improved while 17.3 percent of the members indicated that it had greatly improved. However 4.1 percent of the PMT members also said that it was poor while 1.0 percent of the same group said that there was no improvement. In terms of School Committee Involvement in school management, 16.3 percent of the task force members said that it had greatly improved while 35.7 percent of the same group said that it was good. 5.1 percent of the secretaries said that it was good while 2.0 percent of the chairpersons also said that it was good. However the highest percent of PMT members said that it was average with 32.7 percent and no improvement with 2.0 percent.

17.3 percent of the PMT members said that communication had greatly improved while 45.9 percent of the same group said that it was good. 3.1 percent of the PMT secretaries said that it was good while 2.0 percent of the treasurers said that it was average. In terms of communication between schools and zones, 3.1 percent of the PMT chairperson's said that it was good while 40.8 percent of the PMT members also said that it was good. 25.5 percent of all the members also said that school-zone communication had greatly improved and 3.1 percent of the secretaries also said it had improved. Another 2.0 percent of the treasurers said that it was average. A total of 22.4 percent of the PMT members said that communication between zones and district had greatly improved while 3.1 percent of the PMT chairpersons said that it was good; 2.0 percent of the PMT treasurers said that communication between zones and district was average while 1.0 percent of the PMT members said that it was poor. In terms of communication between District and the Division, 3.1 percent of the PMT chairpersons said that it was good while 32.7 percent of the PMT members also said that it was good. However 4.1 percent of the PMT treasurers said that it was poor. A lot of the PMT members said that communication had greatly improved with 32.7 percent while 2.0 percent of the PMT chairpersons said that it was good and another 4.1 percent of the PMT secretaries said that it was good. However 1.0 percent of the PMT treasurers said that it was poor and another 3.1 percent of the members said that there was no improvement. The PMT chairpersons said that communication between DEM and DA had greatly improved with 2.0 percent while 33.7 percent of the PMT members said that it had greatly improved. However 1.0 percent of the PMT members indicated no improvement while another 1.0 percent of the same group said that it was poor.

C District Education Services Improvement by Task Force

The highest percentage of people saying that supervision and coordination by DEMs office had greatly improved came from Task Force 5 with 11.2 percent while Task Force 3 said it was good with 10.2 percent. Task Force 1 members indicated no improvement with 2.0 percent while 1.0 percent of Task Force 8 members said it was poor. In terms of information flow, 8.2 percent from Task Force 5 said it had greatly improved while 9.2 percent from Task Force 6 said that it was good. However 1.0 percent each from Task Forces 1, 8 and 3 said that it was poor while Task Force 1 also indicated no improvement.

The highest percent of members saying that supervision by PEAs had greatly improved came from Task Force 5 while that saying it was good also came from the same 11.2 percent. Task Force 1 had the highest percent saying that it was poor with 2.0 percent. Task Force 2 members had the highest percentage saying that school committee involvement in school management was good with 11.2 percent while Task Forces 4 and 5 said it had greatly improved with 4.1 percent each. Only Task Force 1 members said there was no school committee involvement improvement with 2.0 percent.

Members from Task Force 5 said that communication had greatly improved with 8.2 percent while Task Force 2 members said that it was good with 12.2 percent and Task Force 1 said there was no improvement with 1.0 percent. A greater percent of members saying that communication between schools and zones had greatly improved came from Task Force 5 with 11.2 percent while Task Force 2 also said it was good with 11.2 percent. Task Force 1 members said there was no improvement with 1 percent. A high percent (3.1) of Task Force 1 members said that there was no improvement while 1.0 percent of Task Force 6 members said that it was poor. However 9.2 percent of Task Force 5 members said it was good and another 8.2 percent of Task Force 2 members also indicated the same. The highest percent of members saying that communication between zones and district had greatly improved came from Task Force 5 with 7.1 percent. Members from Task Force 3 said that communication between district and division was good with 9.2 percent while Task Force 5 said that it had greatly improved with 7.1 percent. Task Forces 1, 2, 3 and 5 also said it was poor with Task Force 1 indicating no improvement with 3.1 percent. In terms of communication between district and ministry headquarters, Task Force 5 said it had greatly improved with 11.2 percent while Task Force 2 said that it was good with 10.2 percent. However Task Force 1 said it was poor with 1.0 percent and the same Task Force 1 indicated no improvement with 3.1 percent. Members from Task Force 5 and 3 said that communication between DEM and DA had greatly improved with 11.2 percent and 8.2 percent respectively while Task Force 2 said that it was good with 10.2 percent. Task Force 3 members said that it was poor with 1.0 percent while Task Force 1 said there was no improvement with also 1.0 percent.

iv). District Development Projects

The assessment of projects on aggregate showed that from the PMT level down to Task Force and district, in general, there was general consensus the projects were implemented in an acceptable manner (see Table 2.5). Thus it can be inferred that the different levels were doing the taking relevant actions which can be associated with capacity development in respective districts. Specifically the results showed that the respondents felt that the projects were based on local needs, from the DEPs, contributed to education development and involved stakeholders which in turn led to ownership.

Table 2.5: Capacity in district development projects

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly improved
1.PMT members capacity	1.5	2.6	1.7	38.9	40.4
2. Task force capacity	1.5	2.6	1.7	38.9	40.4
3. Overall district capacity	1.5	2.6	1.7	38.9	40.4

(Note Appendix II contains detail responses)

A Overall Assessment of District Development Projects by District

A total of 40.4 percent of the districts agreed that projects are planned according to local needs with Mchinji having the highest percent of 9.9 percent another 40.6 percent said they strongly agreed while 2.0 percent of the members from Nkhata Bay and Nsanje said they disagreed. A total of 54.5 percent of the district members said they strongly agreed that projects are planned based on DEP with Thyolo having 11.9 percent and Mchinji 10.9 percent while a total of 37.6 percent said they agreed and 1.0 percent from Nkhata Bay said they strongly disagreed.

A total of 24.8 percent of the district members said they strongly agreed that projects contribute to education development with the highest percent coming from Ntchisi 5.9 percent while 38.6 percent said they agreed and a total of 32.7 percent generally agreed and only 3.0 percent from Machinga, Ntchisi and Thyolo disagreed. 44.6 percent of the members agreed with the highest percent coming from Mchinji (10.9). Another 25.7 percent strongly agreed that DEP is effectively utilized in education development while another 25.7 percent generally agreed. 2.0 percent of the total members from Ntchisi and Thyolo disagreed while Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi also strongly disagreed. 41.6 percent of the members strongly agreed that DEP is effective in implementing DDF with highest percent (9.9 and 7.9) coming from Mchinji and Machinga respectively. Another 37.6 percent said they agreed while a total of 5.9 percent said they disagreed.

A total of 42.6 percent said they strongly agreed that Stakeholders are involved in project planning with 11.9 percent coming Mchinji and another 36.6 percent said they agreed while only 1 percent from Nkhata Bay said they strongly agreed. A total of 33.7 percent of the district members said that they strongly agreed that Stakeholders are involved in project implementation with Mchinji having the highest percent of 7.9 percent another 35.6 percent said they agreed while 4.0 percent disagreed and another 4 percent totally disagreed. 53.5 percent of the total members said they agreed that Stakeholders have ownership of the projects and another 25.7 percent said they strongly agreed. And 14.9 percent generally agreed. 1.0 percent from Nkhata Bay said they strongly disagreed while 5 percent said they disagreed.

The highest percent of the members said they agreed that information on development projects is well provided while 29.7 percent said they strongly agreed to this. However 2.0 percent from Nkhata Bay and 1.0 percent from Mchinji said they disagreed. 51.5 percent of the total members from the Districts said that they agreed that projects funds

are properly accounted for with Mchinji being the highest with 11.9 percent while 26.7 percent said they strongly agreed. However 1.0 percent from Mchinji said they disagreed. 99 percent of the total members said they strongly disagreed that projects were implemented in a transparent manner while 1.0 percent from Nkhata Bay said they agreed.

B. Assessment of District Development Projects by PMT members

A total of 101 members responded to the assessment of district development projects by PMT members. In terms of projects being planned based on local needs, 33.7 percent of the PMT members strongly agreed while 4.0 percent of the PMT chairpersons and 2 percent of the PMT secretaries and 1.0 percent of treasurers also strongly agreed that they were planned according to local need. However 2.0 percent of the PMT members strongly disagreed that projects were planned according to local needs. A high percent of the PMT members 47.5 percent strongly agreed that the projects were planned according to the DEP while only 3.0 percent of the PMT secretaries and 2.0 percent of chairpersons and treasurers also strongly agreed. Only 1 percent of the PMT members said they strongly disagreed to this. 20.8 percent of the PMT members said they strongly agreed that projects contribute to education development while 3.0 percent of the same group said they disagreed. Another 3.0 percent of the PMT chairpersons said they strongly agreed while 3 percent of the PMT treasurers said they generally agreed.

33.7 percent of the PMT members said they agreed while 5.9 percent of the PMT members' secretaries also said they agreed on DEPs being effectively utilized in education development (See appendix IIA for specific tables and details). However 1.0 percent of the PMT treasurers and 1.0 percent of the PMT members said they strongly disagreed that DEP is effectively utilized in education development. 4.0 of the PMT secretaries 34.7 percent of members and 3.0 percent of chairpersons said they strongly disagreed that DEP is effective in implementing the DDF while 1 percent of PMT chairpersons and 5.0 percent of members said they disagreed.

In terms of stakeholders being involved in Project Planning, 34.7 percent of members and 4.0 percent of chairpersons and another 4.0 percent of PMT secretaries said they strongly agreed on stakeholders' involvement while 3.0 percent of PMT members said they disagreed. A total of 53.5 percent of all the members agreed that Stakeholders have ownership of the projects while 1.0 percent of the members (all members) strongly disagreed to this and another 14.9 percent of all the members generally agreed.

The highest percent of the PMT members 43.6 percent said they agreed that information on development projects is well provided while 3.0 percent of PMT chairs and another 3.0 percent of PMT treasurers said they strongly agreed to this. However only 3.0 percent of the PMT members did not agree that information on development projects is well provided. Over half of the total members 51.5 percent said they agreed that project funds are properly accounted for while a total of 18.8 percent generally agreed and 26.7 percent strongly agreed to this. However, 2.0 percent strongly disagreed that project funds were properly accounted for. 99.0 percent of the total members strongly agreed that projects are implemented in a transparent manner while 1.0 percent disagreed to this.

C Assessment of District Development Projects by Task Force

A total of 109 members responded on projects being planned based on local needs. 40.6 percent out of the total which responded under Task Force said they strongly agreed that projects are planned based on local needs with the highest percent (11.9) coming from Task Force 5 while 2.0 percent of the total members said they strongly disagreed and another 42.6 percent said they agreed. 54.5 percent of the total Task Force members said they strongly agreed while 37.6 percent said they agreed and only 1.0 percent said they strongly disagreed. 54.5 percent of the total Task Force members said they strongly agreed while 37.6 percent said they agreed and only 1.0 percent said they strongly disagreed. A high percent of the total Task Force members said they agreed that projects contribute to education development with 38.6 percent while another 32.7 percent said they generally agreed, 24.8 percent strongly agreed, however 3.0 percent disagreed.

A total number of 44.6 percent of the total members agreed that DEP is effectively utilized in education development while 25.7 percent strongly agreed and generally agreed and only 2 percent disagreed. 41.6 percent strongly agreed that DEP is effective in implementation of DDF while 37.6 percent said they agreed. Thus most members agreed that DEP is effective in implementation of DDF. However 13.9 percent of the total members said they generally agreed and only 5.9 percent said they disagreed. A total of 42.6 percent of Task Force members said they strongly agreed that stakeholders are involved in project planning with highest percent coming from task force 5 while 36.6 percent said they agreed and a total of 3.0 percent from task force 3, 4 and 7 said they disagreed.

A total of 53.5 percent of the members said they agreed that stakeholders have ownership of the projects while 25.7 percent said they strongly agreed and 14.9 percent generally agreed. However a total of 5 percent disagreed. A total of 48.5 percent of the members agreed while 29.7 percent strongly agreed and 3.0 percent disagreed. 51.5 percent of the total TF members said they agreed that project funds are properly accounted for while 26.7 percent strongly agreed and 18.8 percent generally agreed. 2.0 percent strongly disagreed. 99.0 percent of the TF members strongly disagreed that projects are implemented in a transparent manner while 1 percent agreed.

v) Implementation of In-service Training (INSET)

A Overall Assessment of Implementation of INSET by the District

47.0 percent of the Task Force members said that needs assessment was good while 24.3 percent of the members said it was excellent. Out of these, Mchinji had 13.9 percent saying it was good while Machinga and Ntchisi had 9.6 percent. A total of 5.2 percent of the members said there was no skill while 1.7 percent said it was poor, these were from Mchinji and Ntchisi districts. The highest percent of members saying that formulation of training program was good came from Machinga and Mchinji districts. Machinga had 10.4 percent while Mchinji had 11.3 percent. A total of 3.5 percent of the members said that it was poor while a total of 2.6 percent said there was no skill. 47.8 percent of the

members said that implementation of training was good, and the highest percentage of 12.2 percent came from Machinga district. 30.4 percent said that it was good while 4.3 percent said it was poor. 33.0 percent of the members said that it was good while 26.1 percent said it was excellent only 4.3 percent of the members said it was poor and 6.1 percent said there was no skill.

B. Assessment of Implementation of INSET by PMT Members

A total of 49.0 percent of the PMT members indicated that needs assessment of INSET was good while another 25.5 percent of the members indicated that it was excellent. However 4.1 percent of the PMT members indicated that there was no skill acquisition. Mchinji and Ntchisi districts indicated that it was poor with 1.0 percent each. 50 percent of the PMT members indicated that formulation of the training program was good while 25.5 percent said that it was excellent. However Mchinji and Nkhata Bay districts indicated that there was no acquisition of skill with 1.0 percent each and 3.1 percent said that it was poor. A total of 51.0 percent of the members said that implementation of the training was good with another 12.2 percent saying that it was excellent. However 3.1 percent and 2.0 percent said that there was no skill acquisition and poor respectively. 35.7 percent of the PMT members said that follow up and evaluation was average while 32.7 percent said that it was good. However Mchinji and Nkhata Bay districts felt that it was poor with 4.1 percent while 6.1 percent said that there was no skill acquired.

C Assessment of Implementation of INSET by Task Force Members

A total of 47.0 percent of the Task Force members said that needs assessment was good with the highest percentage coming from Task Force 5 while 24.3 percent said it was excellent and 21.7 percent said it was average. 5.2 percent said that there was no skill acquired while 1.7 percent said it was poor. 49.6 percent members said that formulation of training program was good while 24.3 percent said that it was excellent. However members from Task Forces 1, 4 and 6 said there was no skill while a total of 3.5 percent of the members said it was poor. 47.8 percent of the Task Force members indicated that the implementation of training was good while 13.9 percent said that it was excellent. However 30.4 percent of the members said that it was average while only 3.5 percent said that there was no skill observed. 38 out of the 109 members indicated that follow up and evaluation was good by the Task Force. Out of these respondents, a total of 35 members indicated that it was average while a total of 5 said it was poor.

vi) Detailed Planning

The assessment of levels of detailed planning has been presented below in terms of overall PMT planning and where applicable specified for a district, task force and a generalized district situation.

A Overall Assessment of Detailed Planning by the District

45.0 percent of the districts indicated that preparation of project proposals was good. The highest percentage came from Nsanje with 11.0 percent. A total of 31.2 percent indicated that it was average. However a total of 2.8 percent from Mchinji and Thyolo districts said that preparation of project proposals was poor. 17.4 percent indicated that planning of operation structures was excellent with the highest percentage coming from Mchinji district. However another 53.2 percent said it was good. Only 1.8 percent of the members said there was no skill while 3.7 percent said it was poor.

The highest percentage of the respondents said that preparation of activity and timeliness was good with 34.9 percent out of these respondents. The highest percentage of 11.9 percent came from Mchinji district. However only 4.6 percent of the members said preparation of activity plans and timeliness was poor. 56.9 percent of the members said that detailed budget plans were good while 18.3 percent said they were excellent and another 18.3 percent said they were average. However 2.8 percent said there was no acquisition of skills. Those who indicated no skill acquisition were from Nkhata Bay and Ntchisi districts.

47.7 percent of the members said that monitoring and reporting was good with the highest percentage of 11.9 percent coming from Mchinji. 1.8 percent of the members said that it was poor while a total of 3.7 percent said that there was no acquisition of skill. 51.4 percent of the members from the districts said that evaluation was good while 22.9 percent said it was average. However a total of 1.8 percent of the members said evaluation was poor while 5.5 percent said there was no skill acquisition.

B Assessment of Detailed Planning by PMT

45.0 percent of the PMT members said that preparation of project proposals was good while 17.4 percent said it was excellent. However 2.8 percent said it was poor while 3.7 percent said there was no skill acquisition. 42.9 percent of the PMT members said that preparation of project proposals was good with the highest percentage of 11.0 percent coming from Mchinji district. 34.1 percent said it was average with highest percentage of 11.0 percent coming from Machinga district. However a total of 3.3 percent said it was poor. 53.2 percent said that planning of operational structures was good while 23.9 percent said it was average. However 1.8 percent of the members said there was no skill while 3.7 percent said it was poor. 54.9 percent of the PMT members by district said that planning of operation structures were good. The highest percentage came from Ntchisi PMT members. However 3.3 percent of the members said it was poor and 1.1 percent from Nkhata Bay said there was no skill. 34.9 percent of the members said preparation of activity plans was good with highest percent of 30.3 percent coming from the all respondents while 3.7 percent came from the PMT secretaries. A total of 4.6 percent said there was no skill while another 4.6 percent said it was poor.

A total of 36.3 percent said that preparation of activity plans and timeliness was good and another 36.3 percent said it was average. However only 5.5 percent said it was poor and

4.4 percent said there was no skill. 56.9 percent of the PMT members said that detailed budget plans were good while 18.3 percent said they were excellent and another 18.3 percent said there were average, only 2.8 percent said there was no skill while 3.7 percent said detailed budget plans were poor. 57.1 percent of the PMT members by district said detailed budget plans were good and the highest percentage of 14.3 percent of these came from Machinga district. 17.6 percent said it was excellent while 2.2 percent said there was no skill. A total of 47.7 percent of the PMT members said that monitoring and reporting was good while a total of 31.2 percent said it was average. Only 1.8 percent of the PMT members said monitoring and reporting was poor while 3.7 percent said there was no skill acquisition. 48.4 percent of the all members who responded said monitoring and reporting was good with Mchinji members having the highest percentage of 12.1 percent. A total of 2.2 percent said it was poor and another 3.3 percent said there was no skill.

51.4 percent of the all respondents stated that evaluation was good while 22.9 percent said it was average. However 1.8 percent said it was poor and 5.5 percent said there was no skill acquisition. At district level 53.7 percent of the members said that evaluation was good with highest percentage of 13.2 percent coming from Mchinji district. 1.1 percent of the PMT members from Mchinji said evaluation was poor while 5.5 percent said there was no skill acquisition. 98.7 percent of the PMT members also indicated that they enjoyed participating in the NIPDEP project. The highest score was from Mchinji district (21.1 percent).

C Assessment of Detailed Planning by Task Force

45.0 percent of the 109 respondents on Task Force members' ability to execute detailed planning said that preparation of project proposals was good with the highest percentage coming under Task Forces 4 and 5. 2.8 percent of the respondents said the preparation of project proposals was poor while 3.7 percent said there was no acquisition of skills. 53.2 percent of the respondents said planning of operational structures was with the highest percentage of 14.7 percent observed on Task Force 5. 1.8 percent of the members from Task Force 1 said there was no skill while 3.7 percent said it was poor. 34.9 percent of the members said that preparation of activity plans and timeliness was good with the highest percentage of 9.2 percent coming under Task Force 3. A total of 22.0 percent said that preparation of activity plans and timeliness was excellent. However a total of 4.6 percent said that it was poor and another 4.6 percent said there was no skill acquisition observed.

A total of 56.9 percent of the respondents on Task Force ability said that detailed budget plans were good while 18.3 percent said detailed budget plans were excellent and the percent (18.3) said it was average. The highest percentage of Task Force members saying that monitoring and reporting was good came from Task Force 4 with 11.99 percent. However 1.8 percent of the members said that monitoring and reporting was poor while 3.7 percent said there was no skill in monitoring and reporting. 51.4 percent of the members said evaluation was good while 18.3 percent said it was excellent. However 1.8 percent of the members from Task Force 1 and 6 said evaluation was poor while a total of

5.5 percent said there was no skill. A majority of the respondents including Task Force members said that they enjoyed participating in the NIPDEP project with 98.7 percent.

2.1.2. Results of Follow-ups in Pilot Districts

The first follow up responses did not differ markedly from the preliminary one in terms of scores as per opinion of the respondents. Specifically, the respondents were of the opinion that training had taken place and the level of attainment in capacity development was largely from average to above average in the all disciplines presented under Table 2-6. However implementation of construction had a relatively high level of “no improvement” in comparison with the other items evaluated. When the results are assessed further, it is noticed that most of those who had improved in their capacity were from the DEM’s offices. Notwithstanding the favourable responses from the DEM’s office, the DPDs claimed that they were at average or above in their skill acquisition. It was the DoFs who seemed not to have made much gain in terms of budgetary and financial issues under NIPDEP.

Table 2.6: First follow-up summary of responses from pilot districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	4.3	2.2	27.9	45.7	20.0
2. DEP preparation and updating	6.6	7.9	14.6	49.7	21.1
3. Marketing of DEPs	9.6	19.1	40.0	25.7	5.7
4. Detailed planning	2.4	5.3	31.1	42.6	18.6
5. Implementation of in-service training	5.7	5.0	24.3	43.6	21.4
6. Implementation of procurement	5.2	4.0	30.3	36.0	24.6
7. Implementation of construction	12.5	6.9	26.3	36.6	17.7
8. PMT/TF performance has been improved through implementing NIPDEP pilot projects	1.84	2.4	20.2	48.0	27.5
10. Capability for following activities has been build through NIPDEP project	2.9	1.3	21.6	48.9	25.4
11. The education services in own district has improved during NIPDEP project	5.7	3.7	26.0	43.7	20.8
12. Assessment of development in district	4.7	5.7	19.0	33.8	36.9

Appendix II B contains detailed scores for capacity which were expected to be developed through the project. Thus the evaluated items in Table 2-6 are disaggregated to show the different specific capacity development items in Appendix II B under six tables.

From the PMT/TF perspective, it can be noticed that very few persons had poor or no capacity building acquisition. This may reflect the active use of the two structures (PMT and TF) in planning and implementing projects. Specifically the TF had no “poor” or “no improvement” respondents in three areas of performance, namely: planning capability, team work and financial management and transparency.

After the first follow-up, a final follow-up of pilot district was done in May/June 2005. The same questionnaire, as at first follow-up was administered to PMT and Task Force members in the pilot districts. However 149 people out of an expected 359 from all six pilot districts responded. From the aggregated results of the responses (Table 2-7 below), it was found that most respondents felt that they had developed their capacity under the NIPDEP project.

Table 2-7: Final follow-up summary of responses from pilot districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	10.1	4.7	24.8	46.8	13.5
2. DEP preparation and updating	11.1	5.5	28.9	41.1	13.4
3. Marketing of DEPs	19.1	10.1	32.2	28.6	9.9
4. Detailed planning	7.3	6.7	24.1	42.5	19.4
5. Implementation of in-service training	8.9	4.6	22.1	46.6	17.7
6. Implementation of procurement	15.4	7.4	21.5	33.4	22.3
7. Implementation of construction	24.4	7.9	20.5	29.7	17.4
8. PMT/TF performance has been improved through implementing NIPDEP pilot projects	4.6	3.0	21.9	44.3	26.2
9. Capability for following activities has been build through NIPDEP project	4.2	2.4	20.3	46.3	26.8
10. The education services in own district has improved during NIPDEP project	8.4	2.5	22.5	46.5	20.1
11. Assessment of development in district	7.4	4.2	19.0	38.1	31.3

In comparison with Tables 2-5 and 2-6, Table 2-7 shows that there were more people at the two extremes of the pendulum (no improvement and greatly improved) than was the case during the preliminary and first follow-up. Notwithstanding this, there were more persons who responded from average to greatly improved during the last exercise. One expects that the skew towards greatly improved was possible reflection of the PMT and TF of skills acquisition taking place under the current capacity development by NIPDEP.

Overall, it can be concluded that the three surveys reflect the same answer that capacity building was felt to have taken place during the NIPDEP. Furthermore, although acquisition of no skill and poor can not be ignored, it is the positive side of capacity development which reigned supreme. Thus it is apparent that the mode and process of capacity building advanced by this programme was all in all likely effective for the type of trainees which was targeted.

2.2 Results of Non-Pilot Districts

2.2.1 Results of the Preliminary Survey

A questionnaire to assess own capacity in DEP preparation, own capacity in project implementation, project management capability, education services in the districts and development in district was administered to 87 persons (68 males and 19 females) in 27 non-pilot districts. A summary of the findings for the non-pilot districts highlight that most respondents, mainly from the District Education Manager's office (DEM, CPEA and desk officers) had average to good improvement of skills acquired through the DEP updating and training workshop. However, there were marked significant problems on skill acquisition in the following areas: marketing of DEPs, detailed planning, implementation (in-service, procurement, construction), evaluation, and preparation and translation of DEPs (see Table 2-8 below).

Table 2-8: Preliminary summary of responses from non-pilot districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	8.0	4.0	37.4	40.4	10.2
2. DEP preparation and updating	5.02	8.4	48.6	31.1	6.9
3. Marketing of DEPs	20.6	19.4	41.1	13.6	5.3
4. Detailed planning	26.2	7.2	39.45	22.8	4.2
5. Implementation of in-service training	20.4	7.2	29.0	36.8	6.6
6. Implementation of procurement	22.5	7.3	31.0	29.2	9.8
7. Implementation of construction	26.1	9.75	26.7	28.7	8.6
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation under NIPDEP project	31.2	4.6	25.7	29.4	9.0
10. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	4.0	1.0	3.9	73.7	17.7
11. Assessment of development in district	9.9	10.2	28.3	34.0	17.6

A Detailed presentation of findings of self analysis responses of district officials from these non-pilot districts is presented below in terms of each evaluated item and can be verified in Appendix III.

A Own Capacity in DEP Preparation, Updating and Marketing

81 of the 87 persons responded to the question of improvement in DEP preparation, updating and marketing. The responses of these persons have been summarized in Appendix III A: Table 2.1.

On aggregate the respondents stated that their DEP preparation, updating and marketing skills were improving with most of them being at average and good levels. Of interest was a reasonable number who confessed that their abilities were at zero and/or poor. Furthermore, this result highlighted that in there were some people who had no background of what was being done. Interestingly when one analyses the information by profession it was the DEMs and CPEAs who had a good understanding and improvement of the subject being questioned. In addition, 25 percent of DPDs who responded indicated that they had no skill in data collection, usage and management. Also a significant number of data officers had apparent weaknesses in the entire process of collection and handling of education data. Some members of the same group of DPD had problems in all five areas of DEP preparation and management: whereas the DEM officers, mainly CPEAs were in most cases average and above in their improvement levels as part of skill acquisition.

B Own Capacity in Project Implementation

After the initial training of phase I when members prepared the first DEPs it was self analyzed by respondents that there was no change on capacity in project implementation for 23.8 percent of those who responded. The majority of the people who felt there was no change/improvement did not come from the education sector. In such a group of no change, it was notable to learn that even three Directors of Planning and Development indicated that they had no capacity to implement projects.

It is important to also highlight that the majority of the respondents who felt their skills had improved largely fell between average to good score and very few felt that they had greatly improved. As stated in the preceding paragraph, it was largely personnel from the District Education Office who felt that their skills had improved. There were also a significant number of District Assembly personnel who felt that their skills had improved. One of the possible reasons for such a positive response was the continuous experience by and presence of these persons in DEP preparation its implementation and updating.

Overall, one observes that when the "no improvement" and "poor" are taken as one they give a fairly even spread of skill development amongst non-pilot district personnel on own capacity in project implementation except for "greatly improved" categories. Furthermore, community mobilization is apparently the best skill acquired whereas skills such as preparation of project proposals, planning of operation structures, bidding and selection of suppliers and to an extent needs assessment have not been easy to acquire (see Appendix III A: Table 2.2 for details).

C Project Management Capability

Respondents indicated that on project management capability, there was no skills for 25 percent of the 81 people who responded to the questionnaire. As has been noted earlier the majority of those who did not have skills were from the District Assembly. When assessing the skill acquisition under Table 2.8, it is observed that on aggregate no improvement had the highest score. Thus, it can be construed that a significant number of personnel did not learn anything. However, this statement is countered by the 25.7 percent (average group), 29.4 percent (good group) and 9 percent (greatly improved group) as total because it reflects that more people had acquired a skill than those below average (see Appendix III A: Table 2.3).

D Education Services in the Districts

On aggregate 68.7 percent of the respondents attained reasonable to above average skills in executing education services in the non-pilot districts (see Appendix III A: Table 2.4). Although there are a number of significant “no improvements” responses (25.2 percent), overall the information flow to and from DEM office was positive. Basing on the score categories under “no improvement” and “poor”, it was “school committee involvement in school management” and “communication between district and MoE headquarters” which reflected relatively high level of poor skill development.

The high level of positive development of “communication between the school and zone” reinforced the expectation that the school is close to the zone. Likewise, it was interesting to note that “communication between stakeholders and district” was largely average which reflected that there was still a significant amount of learning to be done for the district to be labeled fully successful in capacity building. However, on aggregate the stakeholders were on course in being positively identified with the capacity development under education services in the district.

Among the evaluated items the “communication between DEM office and district assembly had the highest response under “greatly improved”. Generally “supervision by PEAs” was apparently on course in terms of skill development although 25.6 percent of the respondents indicated that they observed no improvement. This entails that a significant number of PEAs still had to master their skills in providing education services in the district (see Appendix III A: Table 2.4 for details).

E Development in District

Overall assessment of development in district showed that the capacity development was very positive. It was only 20.1 percent of the respondents who indicated that they were either without any skill in executing activities in the context of local needs or their appreciation was poor. In these activities capacity built in the light of projects or activities contributing to education development had the highest score under “good” and “strongly agree”. Whereas Under “strongly disagree”, 16.1 percent, which was the highest grouping of responses, felt that there was no realization that DEPs were effective

in implementing DDF. In addition, a significant group of respondents stated that information on development projects by the different donors was poor (See Appendix III A: Table 2.5 for details).

In terms of the type of personnel, the DPDs and DPWs were the ones who were most optimistic of the development in the district in relation to DEPs. This group was closely followed by DEMs and CPEAs. The Directors of Finance were the extreme group who strongly disagreed with a number of issues that tried to highlight the positive changes underlying capacity building in district development of education.

2.2.2 Results of Follow-ups in Selected Non-Pilot Districts

Table 2-9 below shows that there are more people with average and above scores which implied that they improved their ability in the eleven areas that is responded to. However, a significant number of respondents showed that their abilities did not improve or it was still poor. In terms of specific group of people, the DPDs and CPEAs were all average or above whereas the DPWs and DCDOs had members who indicated that their abilities were still having problems in skill acquisition (see Appendix III B for details).

Table 2-9: First follow-up summary of responses from non-pilot districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	12.2	6.7	24.3	45.9	10.8
2. DEP preparation and updating	15.7	10.8	22.7	44.8	5.9
3. Marketing of DEPs	29.1	16.5	33.0	17.5	3.9
4. Detailed planning	14.0	13.1	35.6	27.4	9.9
5. Implementation of in-service training	12.8	12.8	26.3	35.1	12.8
6. Implementation of procurement	14.0	11.9	26.5	34.0	13.5
7. Implementation of construction	10.8	14.6	25.9	37.8	10.8
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation under NIPDEP project	9.6	12.0	30.3	33.3	14.7
9. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	20.0	11.0	20.4	37.9	10.6
10. Assessment of development in district	11.1	8.6	29.2	31.2	19.9

In comparison with the initial survey, the current analysis shows that the DPDs had changed much in that more of these officers stated that they had learnt a number of skills

in the light of being average or above. Of interest was the inability by Directors of Finances (DoFs) to learn anything on accounting project funds properly. This probably reflected the inability by the DoFs to take advantage of the District Development Funds and other project funds sourced by the district as part of training (skill acquisition).

Five months after the first follow-up, most of the 47 interviewed persons from non-pilot districts felt that they had acquired skills. Specifically Table 2-10 below shows that a majority of the respondents were from average to greatly improved. On aggregate, there were more good ratings in the ten items that were evaluated than the rest. Of course an exception was item number one (collection and handling of education data) which depicted that there were a significant number of respondents (17.7 percent) who did not learn anything through the project. It was also interesting to note that 21.3 percent of the respondents indicated that their acquired ability to market the DEP was poor. This rating is understandable because the non-pilot districts did not have any opportunity to undergo rigorous data collection and/or DEP marketing as part of their training.

Table 2-10: Final follow-up summary of responses from non-pilot districts (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	17.7	6.4	21.8	36.2	18.1
2. DEP preparation and updating	17.0	7.2	32.8	32.4	10.6
3. Marketing of DEPs	21.3	20.5	29.8	24.8	3.6
4. Detailed planning	12.7	10.6	27.1	37.9	11.7
5. Implementation of in-service training	12.2	10.1	39.3	31.9	6.4
6. Implementation of procurement	15.7	11.4	22.3	38.1	12.5
7. Implementation of construction	7.2	55.9	11.8	18.8	6.2
8. Personal evaluation on capacity built through DEP preparation under NIPDEP project	15.2	5.1	24.7	40.4	14.6
9. Improved education services through preparing and having DEPs	9.8	8.0	17.2	47.5	17.5
10. Assessment of development in district	5.4	6.8	23.2	45.2	19.3

In comparing the three tables (2-8, 2-9 and 2-10) under non-pilot districts show no significant difference in the rating of the responses on aggregate. In other words the first follow-up and final one reflect that learning took place when and after the non-pilot districts interacted with NIPDEP project.

2.3 Results of Capacity Building in DEP Updating

Assessment of DEPs as part of capacity building was conducted during the non-pilot and pilot districts review and updating of DEPs. The assessment has been presented in line with the two separate groups (pilot and non-pilot).

Updating of DEPs started prematurely in February 2003 due to the timing of the Government of Japan fiscal year. 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 NIPDEP phase I. These six pilot districts went through further DEPs updating process in March 2004 in preparation for planning for pilot project proposals of NIPDEP phase II. Parallel to the pilot districts, the non pilot districts had a session each in 2003 and 2004 (see under the list of workshops in Chapter I; Table 1-1).

On the evaluation of capacity building under DEP updating two areas should be highlighted:

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

Overall, the evaluation of these workshops for both pilot and non-pilot districts show 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). Thus the information given was indeed knowledge for practical use in DEP updating for all districts. This was further confirmed by a number of PMT and TF members who attended the training in stating that "This training is applicable in their respective professions as Directors of Planning when preparing the District Development Plan: Whereas DEMs, such as the one from Mchinji, felt that the training was an eye opener in how they can initiate planning issues prior to involving the division planner and others".

Specifically an evaluation of the relevance and applicability of the workshop showed that in all cases where and when a workshop was done the participants order of response was between average and maximum. That is all participants felt that the workshops were useful and/or relevant for their work in general and specific functions. Also all participants recognized that the workshops raised their readiness and ability to update DEPs. Hence it was going to be problematic to update the DEPs if the workshops were not executed as training sessions. In addition, because of following a training sessions approach, the drafting of DEPs proved relatively easy, in the light of coming forth with general solutions, sourcing information and anticipating the implementation of the reviewed and updated DEPs. However, the training was not able to fully assist 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 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.

So it should not be fully concluded that the budget issue was total failure during the training under DEP updating. Besides division of labour in relation to limited time allocation may have affected the process. And to minimize lose of time the teams may have resorted to the use of particular individuals at the expense of the entire team.

For example, under activity budgeting, there was, in some cases, over-reliance on the DoF or equivalent staff. In a way the reliance of particular personnel for specific work should not be seen completely as negative development because it entailed the importance of team work and division of labour in DEP updating. Furthermore it was a reflection of the actual situation at work of division of labour at both the DA and DEM's office.

Arising from failure to execute an activity budget during the DEP updating vis a vis the consequence of division of labour in real life, it can be construed that the importance of team work and sharing experiences was critical if the district team were to go back with improved skills. It can be argued that where an accounts person was available among the district teams, it was to the disadvantage of the district because it was assumed that the DOF or equivalent would reign supreme in completing the exercise whilst the rest of the team would just complement.

Basing on the checklist of the revised DEP during the workshop, the results show that budgetary issues improved with time. That is, the first batch of trainees submitted incomplete documents mainly on budgetary/cost areas; the second batch was better whilst the last group was the best of the three. It can be argued that this result reflected the improvements factored in by the facilitators in the course of executing the training. For instance the activity budget was changed from a Microsoft Word format to Excel in the course of the first stage so that some districts simply stuck to Microsoft Word. Whereas during the second batch all were using Excel although costing of activity steps proved tedious. Ultimately it can be postulated that when activity steps were reduced, the budget exercise was less problematic for the last batch (pilot districts) during their workshop

The observations by core trainers on how the districts faired during the workshop in capacity building depicted the following issues:

- (1) Confirmed the above average level of planning by both the pilot and non-pilot districts for the exercise in terms of prior preparation. However, the biggest shortcoming was on stakeholders survey and collection of data mainly amongst non-pilot districts,
- (2) Poor to non existent ability to use the computer for word processing negatively affected overall capacity growth. However this was countered by the growth in the ability of the participants to understand the exercise with time during the workshop and intent to continue with the work thereafter in realization of its importance for inclusion in the District Development Plan and its use as a resource mobilization and marketing tool, and

- (3) Leadership and team work were above average in all aspects (understanding the purpose/objectives, leading discussions and performing tasks – prioritizing and project preparation) but were average on delegating tasks and creating teamwork

The training sessions were partially affected negatively by too much turnover of staff in all non-pilot districts. That is, a substantial number of the non-pilot districts were not presented by the same persons such as DPDs CPEA and DoFs who attended earlier workshops. At least the pilot districts had a significant level of consistency when it came to workshop participants during the entire training period. Besides due to on-going pilot projects in respective pilot districts, the “new” participants from pilot districts were not complete strangers to the entire process.

On the basis of the aggregated results of the checklist of DEPs revised during the workshop, it can be summed that the entire process was on the whole a success (see the sampled tabulation presented – 22 out of 33 districts below – Table 2-11).

Table 2-11: Aggregate rating of checklist of DEPs revised during the 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 achievement	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

Of interest on the checklist rating were two extreme cases arising from the first batch of training Mwanza district prepared a satisfactory DEP whose total rating was 59 out of 65 while Blantyre Urban had a rating of 32 out of 65. In trying to find the underlying cause of such extreme scenarios, it all comes down to turnover of personnel. In the case of the higher rated situation (Mwanza) the same personnel but for one had been in place since the School Mapping and Micro-Planning period whilst in the lower rated one Blantyre Urban the number of persons who had gone through the previous training was just one (DEM). Thus, it can be deduced that capacity building as advanced by this project was beyond doubt where participants’ continuity was guaranteed. However such a conclusion

only applies where all things remain equal for we are not aware whether the Mwanza personnel had other pre-service or in-service training on planning and developing a plan. Mindful of the foregoing statement, it is still eminent that continuity was a critical factor.

Finally although the link of chapters I to III was found largely to be between average and good, this was in terms of structure of Table 3-1 and others and not specifically in terms of gaps and their priority problems as identified in chapter II. Nonetheless, the structure attempted to exhaust all problems rather than dwell on the prioritized ones. This problem entailed presentation and depth of explanation of issues by the trainers rather than lack of understanding by the trainees.

2.4 Capacity Building of Core Trainers (Division Planners)

The training of the core trainers could be taken as the most elaborate of all personnel who under went NIPDEP project because they were involved from the inception to the end. Besides, the core trainers had an opportunity of “mentoring” because they were in most cases with NIPDEP study team experts in whatever they were doing in addition to having direct access to the same experts even when they were in their respective duty stations. In addition, it was stated and in most cases happening that the core trainers were the first persons to assist and advice their respective districts on project related matters.

Bearing in mind that the core of this training was capacity building in planning with a bias towards decentralization, the core trainer, who was simultaneously a division planner, found NIPDEP an appropriate premise for trying-out and attaining knowledge for planning education at and for micro levels. The only problems highlighted by the core trainers, though their responses were from average to above, were in DEP marketing, Project proposal coordination, marketing and negotiations and leadership. Among these five problematic areas the worst case scenario was leadership (Appendix IV).

Table 2.12: Core trainers summary of responses (% score)

Evaluated Item	No improvement	Poor	Average	Good	Greatly Improved
1. Collection and handling of education data	0	0	23.8	17.8	58.3
2. DEP preparation and updating	0	0	22.0	35.1	43.0
3. Marketing of DEPs	0	0	33.3	44.4	22.2
4. Detailed planning	0	0	0	18.9	81.1
5. Implementation of INSET	0	0	4.9	80.4	14.7
6. Implementation of procurement	0	0	0	60.0	40.0
7. Implementation of construction	0	22.0	22.0	26.3	29.8
8. Monitoring PMT/TF performance improvement	0	0	4.5	54.6	40.9
9. General management capability	0	0	4.0	29.8	66.3
10. Following-up education services in the districts	0	0	1.7	60.0	38.3
11. Following up development in the districts	0	0	8.0	21.5	70.5

It can be argued that since this survey was initiated at a time, the core trainers were already exposed to a number of planning know-how through the school mapping and micro-planning phase and it was the same personnel throughout the two projects, it is inevitable that their abilities are between average and greatly improved (see Table 2-12 above). Of interest is the proclamation that the core trainers had learnt from capacity building exercise a lot in implementing INSET and procurement while admitting that they were poor to average on implementation of construction.

2.5 Conclusion

The different results, both under pilot and non-pilot districts, apparently, show one common feature which is capacity was being developed during the various and diversified training sessions under NIPDEP project. However, the level of capacity acquisition varied between individuals as well as districts. Nonetheless, the pilot districts had higher level of positive scores than the non-pilot districts due to intensity of activities under NIPDEP and retention of staff from the inception until the close of the project. At personnel level the core trainers were the largest beneficiary of the three groups. Thus it is expected that this group of people should be in position to execute their work effectively as planners and train others on what they went through with little or no problem.

Although we may simplify the differing results between the pilot and non-pilot by highlighting the different intensity/involvement of the programme in pilot vis a vis non-pilot districts, there may be other causes: Hence it is worthwhile to try and unveil what other factors which could have made such a difference in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.0 Introduction

The results in Chapter II show that there was every likelihood that capacity development took place in all districts and among the different personnel and groupings (PMT, TF and others). However, it is imperative to determine why this was taking place, how it was taking place and was it ideal. Furthermore, there is need to determine why there were still situations in which some people/districts were not able to attain any capacity or they did so below average as poor capacity building. Besides, there is need to determine the extent to which the mode of capacity acquisition and its process were appropriate or not for capacity development under the NIPDEP project and whether this could be applicable in other situations or not.

This chapter, therefore, looks at the pilots and non-pilot districts in terms of whether what was taking place at district level under the NIPDEP project and outside/beyond and the review and updating of DEPs, as training process for capacity building, could be done better or not; and the methodology used to carry-out the survey provided us with adequate information to claim complete assessment of capacity development under NIPDEP.

3.1 Mode and Process of Training

3.1.1 Pilot Districts

It can be argued that the consequence of having off-the-job (workshops) and on-the-job (pilot projects) training led to thorough development of capacity in the pilot districts. And indeed this led to spillovers because those who did not even attend the training gained knowledge in managing and executing education programmes through a cascade mode like approach. Furthermore, the direct link between theory and practice was one of the best ways of reinforcing the learning process. In fact by translating a number of DEP programmes into projects, the trainees acquired direct skills in determining what can and can not work. In addition, they (trainees) had a chance to reflect on the realities and realism of budgeting in the light of what to expect on paper and what it is in actual situation. Overall, the training was a true reflection of planning versus implementation.

However, it could be argued that the higher level of capacity building observed under the pilot district can not be solely contributed to the workshops and projects under NIPDEP and its earlier programme (school mapping and micro-planning). There have been a number of training sessions done by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, MoE and Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF), including unknown educational or work experience background of the trainees which could be a contributing factor to the observed positive capacity building in the pilot districts.

Although the capacity building was on aggregate positive some of the pilot districts lagged behind in comparison to their counterparts. For instance Nkhata Bay was the least

developed in relation to the other five pilot districts. It can not be argued that Nkhata Bay had only NIPDEP because there were for example projects by UNICEF and the Decentralization Secretariat. In addition members of NIPDEP were at times learning that the district personnel were at times out of the district attending other donor or government training courses on district and/or project management. So, why did the six pilot districts have the poor rating in a number of areas?

From a team work perspective among the districts, it can be argued that Nkhata Bay was the least in carrying work in such a manner. Thus there was obvious lack of synergy in whatever they were doing under NIPDEP. Probably lack of team work was one of the contributing factors towards poor capacity building results because there was no sharing of what specific personnel knew better than their colleagues. It was indeed observed during monitoring visits that some individuals had a better understanding of the projects than others and there was apparent poor if not total blackout of sharing of what the project was doing and would do. Of course there were so called monthly task force meetings. However such meetings were likely emphasizing what rather than how and why some things were taking place in the district under the task forces. Furthermore, the expected knowledgeable persons in different task forces were either absent during meetings or did not offer themselves as trainers or mentors within the district. This may have arisen due to expectation that the training entailed additional funding for the trainers and/or the terms of reference did not define explicitly such roles. Besides, it was apparent that the technical persons were able to meet without inviting the non-technical persons from the same and/or different task forces.

Another factor which could have affected the results poorly in Nkhata Bay was lack understanding of what the entire project entailed in terms of capacity building. It is likely that the personnel in the district did not put it explicit that the intent of the project was to develop their capacity. The preceding conclusion arises because one hardly finds the aspect of capacity building being pursued as a deliberate approach in Nkhata Bay as compared to the rest of the districts. For instance in Nsanje and Machinga there was a deliberate move towards inducting new members who did not participate in the first year of NIPDEP and furthermore team work was prominent so that no one person could claim outright knowledge of the project. It was noted that in some districts other than Nkhata Bay rare expertise was taken advantage of in terms of utilizing it from the Project Management Team and involving such expertise in all related task forces. For example the expertise of the DPW was better used in Mchinji by not confining the person to a particular task force. Such an approach in turn helped to improve and boost the capabilities and abilities of the persons in all respective task forces. Hence one can argue that internally capacity was developed or reinforced by those in the know within and through the district teams.

As the significant failure of Nkhata Bay was management capabilities, it can be construed that perhaps the majority of the personnel in the PMT and TFs were technically minded; hence poor on management issues. In addition it is possible that TFs' and PMTs' meetings were not addressing management issues per se: thus not so easy for the different groupings to learn any management capabilities. Besides, the expected management

items such as planning, implementation, facilitation and evaluation were confined to a few personnel amongst the task force and/or the project management team. Actually when it came to report preparation it was the technical person such as a treasurer without input from the rest of the team who prepared it and submitted to NIPDEP.

In essence, the mode of training which relied on personal appreciation and initiative rather than a set programme with guidelines applicable in the field and not at the time of conducting the training, when it came to learning by doing, was prone to:

- (1). Abuse and monopolizing by the so called "capable" members under both PMT and TF since to these "learned" personnel could take the activity as ensuring completion of work rather than training; and
- (2). The non-knowledgeable members not appreciative of the training for life or work after the projects. This was likely to be the case because a number of members who were in the task forces were not members of other education or school committees nor were they expected to join any education committee after training. In some cases the situation was worsened by an attitude of assuming that the office personnel, such as DEO or DA staff, were the ones to understand any management issues: therefore the rest were just duty bound to follow without questioning and trying to learn.

It was interesting to note that under learning by doing type of training what did not come out clear was the cascade model of training where the few (four to six) from the districts would offer the know-how from the national NIPDEP workshop to the rest of the team in the district (PMT and TF). Indeed one can not categorically say this failed because on aggregate the results show that the PMT and TF had marked positive changes. In addition, as the implementation of projects was done together by all members of both the PMT and TF, it was inevitable for learning to take place. In fact some members, if not all, well involved in the procurement, advising of construction and development of training and awareness campaigns: therefore training must have taken place.

On aggregate, though the training was positive, the need for proper understanding of the procedure was critical to its success. Otherwise, there were possibilities that a significant number of officers took it as just work without taking into consideration the learning and experience that accrues from doing the work itself. Furthermore, the mode of training though practical and enriched with real life exercises was not fully appreciated by all, perhaps, because of getting used to following off-the-job type of training or the traditional mode of training (teacher/lecture to student/trainee method).

In the words of Mr Matayataya, the training would have been ideal if it was formalized and people were going to a place like the Malawi Institute of Management not to prepare office documents but just going to learn like school children. This reflects a different approach to the learning by doing which this project was advancing through out the project. Therefore, it begs the question of whether people understood that the process was skill development or not. Likewise, if people did not understand that the process they were undergoing was skill development, did they understand the purpose of the survey?

3.1.2 Non-pilot Districts

Under the non-pilot districts the overwhelming positive results reflected that the DEP updating left a lasting impact on the training. Furthermore, the four persons who attended the course were presented as able and capable of transferring their experience to their immediate world of work. However, this is an impression rather than an actual because there has not been any attempt to assess the four persons critically in their immediate work environment and determine what and how they were doing when it came to planning and implementation of education activities or other related ones. Besides, even the selected visits to the respective offices did not offer us a chance to assess the work which was being done.

The problems observed under marketing of DEPs, detailed planning, implementation, evaluation, and preparation and translation of DEPs are indeed acceptable because the level of training which these persons underwent was rather short and there was limited follow-up. In addition, the problems in the non-pilot district were compounded by

- (1) The ex-trained not exposed to any practical observation or act of marketing a DEP at an early stage. It is a fact that in most cases projects documents are not marketed in the public service in Malawi but rather submitted to central government for approval and funding. And what this survey was asking was new and unheard of. In addition it has been tradition that the central government has been the main, if not at times sole, route for donor assistance;
- (2) The district system undergoing a number of changes where new recruitments were happening without due regard of one's background/experience. For example it was found that a number of Directors of Public Works and Directors of Planning and Development were ex-teachers or people without any public works and/or planning and development background; and
- (3) Finally, the training was not per se on the areas highlighted as failures, it was rather centred on developing a DEP; therefore there was no opportunity for the non-pilot districts to be assessed at the same level as the pilots who had a full fledged training in developing a DEP, marketing it, implementing and many more in addition to having pilot projects as practical lessons.

Still it is worthwhile to consider that the mode and process of training followed provided a significant number of positive results when one takes into account Table 2-6. In addition, the situation in Salima showed that the DEP was marketed as reflected by the increased donor intervention in relation to increased number of classroom blocks constructed. Furthermore, the results of the follow-up highlighted the positive changes that could be accredited to the training. However, this should be treated with caution because we do not know fully the academic and work background of the personnel in these districts besides we can not say with certainty whether no other training took place or not in these non-pilot districts. Furthermore, the example given could have resulted from general interest of the donors as a result of other factors such as donor bias and/or

political influence; therefore, it may not have been marketing at all. Nonetheless the partial success of the DEP updating should not be ruled out as part of a proper mode and process for training.

3.1.3 Core Trainers (Division Planners)

The making of core trainers proactive by involving them in most if not all stages of implementing, NIPDEP brought forth a positive and obvious learning by doing. In fact attitude of core trainers at the inception of NIPDEP was like that of the demonstration projects under School Mapping and Micro-Planning where they were not involved as much as they expected; therefore, it was imperative for the project (NIPDEP study team) to make them proactive. Thus, the core trainers got involved with their respective pilot districts from their divisions during the training workshops by making presentations of the topics while the study team members facilitated and for both pilot and non-pilot districts they were the front players in updating of DEPs.

However, there was need for the core trainers to be active during the normal working days (after the actual training programme) to help the ex-trainees and assess whether training was taking place or not and also to reinforce the expected work ethics and procedures of education planning and its implementation at grassroots level. Such an approach of core trainers visiting the ex-participant until such a time when they felt that the person has acquired the abilities would have exposed the weakness of the different officers and helped in refining their abilities and capabilities.

It was a blessing that all the six core trainers had been with the project from its inception and had actively participated in all the activities from 2002 to date. Thus their training could not be faulted. However, they lacked an appreciation of how best they could transfer such learning to their colleagues at the district level, mainly the non-pilot districts. It was apparent from the response of the district persons that correspondence between the district and the division was between poor and average. This implied that the core trainers were either taking the sessions during the training programme as an end in themselves and /or they were not sure of follow-up their "protégés" because they were not sure whether they would be able to help effectively at the district level.

The problem of core trainers should be seen from two angles, namely being accepted by the district persons as a "mentor" and understanding one's role in executing this project and capacity building in particular. It is apparent that the role of being a mentor was not emphasized to the core trainers nor assumed by them. It would also be expecting too much from them to work closely with the respective districts within their divisions because of the demands coming from MoE headquarters. However, mentorship should not be completely ruled out because the core trainers, as planners, are key personnel in budgeting and planning issues for district education. In addition, during the training sessions they were associated with their respective districts. Therefore, there was no need for them to be told to help the districts members learn more after the training sessions in the course of executing their respective work in their districts. Nonetheless, the interaction of the core trainers with the district personnel was confined to education

persons after training sessions. Therefore it would require a deliberate statement (explanation) to all members that the core trainers would be visiting their districts to help them master the different know-how on planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, DEP marketing and DEP updating.

Overall, the use of core trainers should be taken seriously because they are the guardians and key persons to the sustainability of capacity developed at the district level. Although they were part of trainees during the project, their training was of the high order because they were taken as trainers of trainees. Hence there was every reason to involve them actively in determining whether training was taking place or not. In addition, the follow-up sessions would have provided them with some elements of objective assessment of capacity building at district level on education planning.

3.2. Methodology Used by Survey

Although the self-rating questionnaire provided some insight on capacity development under the NIPDEP project it only offered us a chance to know how far the participants valued themselves and not whether indeed training was taking root or not. It would have been ideal to include more instruments and/or methodologies for measuring the capacity building than just using a single instrument and method.

For example, the questionnaire could be an entry point at which we could judge what skills the participants had and what they lacked. From this point we could determine the different scenarios for offering training in line with the primary objective of transferring know-how in implementation of projects at grassroots level in relation to planning. Furthermore we ought to have prepared benchmarks for measuring acquisition of knowledge as the project was proceeding. Of course it is understandable that the questionnaire, interview and discussions were expected to reveal the need and abilities of participants in skills acquisition but because this was done largely on three occasions and the real assessment was based on the updating of the DEP not much information was collected at the onset. Hence, it was wrong to just assume that the current training was ideal for all regardless of the differing levels of ability. Indeed, it is true that a majority of the persons were not planners but it should not be overlooked that the persons from the pilot districts and even a reasonable number of those from the non-pilot districts were the same persons who prepared the original DEP. Thus, they had some understanding of what was going on.

In addition, we did not have any chance to verify if in the course of carrying out our training, as on-the-job, the participants were interacting in other arenas and learning the same things consciously or unconsciously. For example, the MASAF project apparently demand better understanding of community participation, project preparation, implementation and monitoring and we were hearing of the DPW and DPD proceeding to such training workshop. It was imperative for us to determine what these workshops were about. In fact, it was observed in one of the discussions recently that the district persons were empowered in terms of understanding the project cycle and budgetary process under MASAF. Somehow this could be likened to having additional training. Actually the

MASAF training can be construed in the light of result oriented because it dwells on solving real issues such as preparation of project budgets which is like the NIPDEP pilot projects.

Under the training process, it has been alluded that there was need for the core trainers to be actively involved. This need not be overemphasized but it is one of the critical factors which could have made a huge difference to capacity development under NIPDEP in that:

- (1) Such a method would have had persons who would monitor actual changes taking place in the districts and provide remedial where need be as quickly as plausible. Furthermore, the consequence of staff turnover in relation to training could be minimized because new personnel would be quickly identified and given some form of induction and thereafter work with the existing district teams: hence the trainee would not be at a complete loss;
- (2) The system would have provided for some form of objectivity when evaluating whether capacity building took place or not because the core trainers would be requested to provide written observations with examples of the changes taking place amongst the participants; and
- (3) The work of districts in budget preparation, others planning and implementation of education are largely verified by the core trainers as planners at the division; hence could easily be compared to the training done under NIPDEP.

Having said that the methodology used by the survey could be improved, it does not imply that the exercise was a complete failure because it provided us with a number of insights on capacity building in terms of education planning and its implementation. As stated earlier, it is a premise for entry in understanding what an individual thinks of her/his abilities in the process of knowledge acquisition. Furthermore, the approach which was advanced in this evaluation study can not be completely flawed because it looked at the participants at three intervals and only concluded thereafter whether capacity was built or not.

In addition, this method gave us an opportunity to compare between the non pilot districts against the pilot in skill acquisition. Therefore, it provided us with information on how best to advance training in terms of having practical experience which transcend to district level such as implementation projects, as for pilot districts, in comparison to just updating DEPs as in non-pilot districts.

Indeed biases are bound to occur due to the use of self assessment questionnaires in determining whether capacity has been built or not. However, this should not negate the entire exercise because we are able to partially understand what and whether certain things are learnt or not. Furthermore, the methodology of this evaluation has given us a chance to see training (capacity building) from the perspective of the trainees.

Although it can be argued that the abilities of the districts improved due to NIPDEP training, the change of participants during the different intervals cast doubt on the credibility of the findings. Indeed it can be generalized that the district had attained new know how but this may not be fully accredited to individuals. In an ideal situation the person who was inducted in the training at the onset should have been the same person completing it. However, the turnover of participants showed that a number of individuals did not fully benefit from the continuous training sessions. The problem of increased turnover was more pronounced in the non-pilot districts than the pilot ones.

However, the argument should be seen in the light of "half a bread is better than none"; therefore, the persons and their respective districts gained some know-how though not complete. Perhaps this was why a large number of respondents stated that their skill acquisition was between average and good. Likewise, it implied that the survey should have been analyzed on a macro (group and district) rather than micro (individual participant) basis. Indeed the focus of analysis of this survey was PMT, TF and overall district gains in capacity building and not individuals. The individuals who were specified under the survey were largely DEMs and to an extent DPDs. These two groups of individuals were largely stable during the NIPDEP project period; hence their assessment could be regarded as valid and reliable in speculating whether they attained something or not.

3.3: Conclusion

The two areas (training process and evaluation methodology) which have been discussed in this chapter should not be taken as arguing that capacity development did not take place in the districts; rather they highlight the need for more rigorous and active capacity building approach and its evaluation methodology if we are to conclude without doubt. Indeed capacity development did take place but could be better done if the process embraced a number of things such as continuity with the same trainees, and the programme had checks and balances beyond a self-assessment questionnaire, such as active monitoring by core trainers.

Overall, the argument put forward in this chapter should provide food for thought for future exercises on capacity development. Whatever is to be done, the self-assessment questionnaire and ensuing interviews and discussions should be taken as points of departure because the questions offer the trainer a chance to tailor make a course and define the level of entry. Likewise, self-assessment alerts the trainees of what to expect in general; therefore, providing readiness for learning and change.