

# CPDF IN MZIMBA NORTH EDUCATION DISTRICT

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## Introduction

My name is Mariska Westdijk. From June 2008 until February 2010 I have been Continuous Professional Development Facilitator (CPDF). At first I worked with Lucie Graham, a colleague VSO volunteer, in the districts Rumphi and Mzimba North. After she had left in February 2009 the VSO Programme Office indicated that I should prioritize activities in Mzimba North Education District, since there had been no VSO volunteer in this district before. From September 2009 Mzimba North has been my only district.

In this report you find a description and evaluation of the activities I facilitated linked to the four outputs of the VSO CPDF program: continuing professional development activities, TDC Management, networking among TDCs and teachers and enhanced capacity of teachers to handle children with special needs education. I pay attention to impact of the activities at different levels - TDC, PEA, ACCO, school, teacher and learner - and give recommendations.

For the lay-out of this report I have used the same Publisher format the district newsletter committee is using for the Mzimba North Education District Newsletter.

To give you better understanding of what has happened in the past two years I have added diverse photos.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report!



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## Mzimba North Education District

Mzimba North Education District in northern Malawi started in 1997, when the vast M'Mbelwa district was divided into two administrative districts.

Mzimba North Education District has 21 zones, all headed by Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), who support the teachers in their zones

via supervision and in service trainings in Teacher Development Centres (TDCs).

Five zones are so called 'new' zones without TDC structures and houses for the PEAs.

The zones consist of 8 - Lusangazi - to 16 primary schools - Bwengu and Erukweni -.

Mzimba North District Education Manager (DEM) is Mr. Laurent R.H. Mwasi-kakata.

The Coordinating Primary Education Advisor (CPEA) is Mr. Patson P.F. Mtumbuka.

The DEM's Office has been in Ekwendeni since September 2002.

## Improved Continuing Professional Development Activities (Output 1)

The first output of the CPDF Programme is 'Improved Continuing Professional Development Activities'

Activities organized under this output are in-service trainings for teachers and PEAs based on identified needs

Project indicators are:

- ⇒ All TDCs have annual plans for CPD based on needs identification
- ⇒ over 70% of teachers in the targeted districts access in-

service trainings at least 3 times a year

- ⇒ Implementation of monthly meetings for all PEAs in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Monitoring and evaluation systems in place and implemented
- ⇒ Inspection and supervision systems/ plans in place and implemented
- ⇒ Over 70% of teachers regularly develop well organized lesson plans and schemes of work as per required standard

## TDC IMPROVEMENT PLANS

The CPDFs introduced TDC Improvement Plans. These forms enable Management Committees to reflect on key strengths and areas for development of their TDCs and zones.

If these are clear, the Management Committees can start making plans to improve their TDCs and zones.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities are one element of these plans

The CPDFs encouraged the PEAs to come up with termly TDC Improvement plans and display them in the TDC Office.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation is embedded in the TDC Improvement Plans.

## Needs Assessment

Needs assessment was an important element of the October 2009 PEAs meeting. The PEAs refreshed their knowledge about the process of needs assessment, like described on pages 10 and further in the TDC Handbook. The CPDF also clarified some ideas of Morrison, Ross and Kemp (2004) about needs assessment.

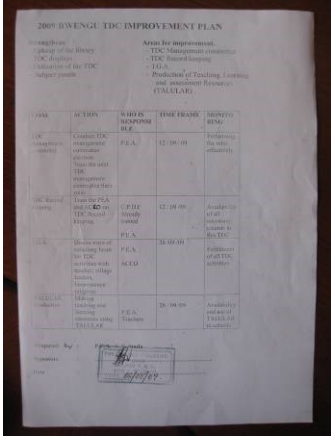
During the same PEAs meeting needs analysis forms were handed out by the CPDF for as well PEAs and ACCOs as input for the CPDF Program for the coming months.

Finally in groups PEAs came up with the most urgent needs in relation to participatory methods in their zones.

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### ☆ Bwengu TDC Improvement Plans ☆

☆ PEA Alfred S. Sinda of Bwengu zone ☆ monthly writes TDC Improvement ☆ Plans, which he displays in the TDC ☆ Office. After describing strengths ☆ and areas of improvement of his TDC ☆ he indicates the goals for the coming ☆ month, followed by activities, persons ☆ responsible and a time frame.



The September 2009 TDC Im-

☆ The Bwengu PEA indicates that the ☆ TDC Improvement Plans help him in ☆ planning Continuous Professional De- ☆ velopment Activities. One of the ac- ☆ tivities he organized in September ☆ 2009 - after noticing during supervi- ☆ sion that teachers hardly used aba- ☆ cuses and place value boxes - was a ☆ TALULAR training for standard 3 ☆ teachers.



☆ Alfred S. Sinda, PEA for Bwengu, and his AC- ☆ CO, Stanley Mkandawire, showing spike abacus- ☆ es and place value boxes, made during the zonal ☆ INSET for standard 3 teachers in September ☆ 2009

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## Subject panels trainings

January 2009 the CPDFs trained the subject panels Chichewa, English, Mathematics, Science and Technology and Social and Environmental Sciences of Mzalangwe zone on their roles and responsibilities. September 2009 the CPDF trained the subject panels Agriculture, Chichewa, English, Mathematics and Science of Mtende zone. The previous CPDF had already trained the subject panels of Engucwini zone.

Goal of the trainings was to develop effective, functioning subject panels in the zones. At the end of the workshop the participants were able to mention the duties and responsibilities of subject panels, had prioritised activities for their own subject panel and made a timetable for the coming term for their own subject panel

PEAs who attended one of the above trainings were Vincent Mhango (Enkondhlweni), Patson Mtumbuka (CPEA), Jakob Ngoma (Chanyama), Clement Zunda (Kapiri), Veronica Lozi (Kapando), Barroness Nyangulu (Njuyu), Lameck Phiri (Bulala), Grace Chirambo (St. Michaels), Margaret Chibambo (Kafukule), Bosco Shaba (Emoneni) and Jimmy Gondwe (Emchisweni).

## Subject panels in Mbalachanda zone

PEAs also discussed the formation, duties and responsibilities of subject panels during their monthly meetings. Domingo Mbale, PEA for Mbalachanda zone, reported in the third issue of the district newsletter about the formation of subject panels in his zone. [See page 16 for his report.](#)

## Lack of Teaching and Learning Resources in schools a concern

When asked in April 2009 about the most urgent need(s) for CPD activities the PEAs expressed their concerns about the inadequate production and use of teaching and learning resources in most schools in the district.

They mentioned understaffing, large classes, security of classrooms, to some teachers lack of commitment, lack of classrooms and inadequate funds as reasons for this underproduction and use of teaching and learning resources.

Barroness Nyangulu, PEA for Njuyu zone, and Jakob Ngoma, PEA for Chanyama zone, asked the CPDF to facilitate TALULAR (=Teaching And Learning Using Locally Available Resources) trainings in their zones.

## Subject panels making a difference in Mzalangwe zone

February 2010 Weckson Mkandawire, PEA for Mzalangwe zone describes the impact of the functioning subject panels in his zone as follows:

- ◇ *'Most teachers deploy participatory methods in the course of teaching and learning process which is a result of demonstration lessons conducted at the zonal as well as school level organized by the subject panels*
- ◇ *Improvement of PSCLE results due to frequent subject panel meetings on sharing expertise on setting and marking question papers. For the 1st time six (06) candidates were selected to N/Sec. schools*
- ◇ *Use of TALULAR—a good number of teachers try to bring some kind of a teaching and learning aid (resource) because of campaign the subject panels make in the zone.'*

## TALULAR trainings in Njuyu and Chanyama zones

On the 14th August 2009 and the 19th September 2009 the CPDF facilitated TALULAR trainings for teachers and volunteer teachers of Njuyu and Chanyama zones.

### Objectives:

At the end of the workshop the participants:

- can describe meaning, types and benefits of TALULAR
- have reflected on production and use of TALULAR in their schools so far
- are familiar with criteria and stages of developing TALULAR
- have developed TALULAR for maths, literacy and one other subject
- have brainstormed how to store TALULAR in their schools
- have individually formulated a way forward for TALULAR in their schools

*The trainings were also attended by the following PEAs: Grace Chirambo (St. Michaels), Qipase Nkosi (Enyezini), Margaret Chibambo (Kafukule), Queen Ndaki (Ezondweni), Kondwani Mbulo (Erukweni), Clement Zunda (Kapiri), Weckson Mkandawire (Mzalangwe), Bosco Shaba (Emoneni), Taniel Munthali (Mtende), Mr. Munthali (head teacher Enkondhlweni) and Alick Kumwenda (head teacher Chamaliwa, Echilumbeni zone). They received training frames, flipcharts and markers to facilitate a TALULAR INSET in their own zones.*



### Zonal TALULAR committee

Kondwani Mbulo, PEA for Erukweni zone, attended the August 2009 TALULAR training at Njuyu TDC. After that training she formed a zonal TALULAR committee in her own zone Erukweni with representatives of all schools.

'I invited the committee members to the TDC for a training about TALULAR and their roles and responsibilities as a committee.' She gave the members the assignment to brief their fellow teachers and come up with more TALULAR in their schools.

'During supervision I make follow ups, to see if schools have really increased their production and use of TALULAR. Shortly I will call the committee to the TDC again to investigate what else the committee can do.'

### Making displays

Qipase Nkosi, PEA for Enyezeni zone, after attending the TALULAR training at Njuyu zone in August 2009, decided to organize a TALULAR training for teachers in her zone, in which she focused on how to make attractive, educative displays and posters.

After the training most teachers took their flipcharts back to their schools. Some others can still be admired in the Enyezeni TDC hall.

### TALULAR competition in Rukuru zone

Agnes Rukuru, Rukuru PEA, organized a TALULAR competition in her zone.

On the 18th August 2009 teachers and learners of Rukuru, Vongo, Kasuma, Lumemo and Khuyu schools in the zone came to the TDC to present, admire and learn from the produced TALULAR.

The jury was formed by CPEA Lilian Chirambo of Rumpfi District and the CPDF Mariska Westdijk. At the end of the morning they handed out wall clocks to the three schools, which had been the most productive and creative.

### Promoting TALULAR banks

One of the sessions in the TALULAR trainings focused on storing TALULAR in a secure, structured way, so that teachers and learners can use the produced TALULAR several times.

PEAs encouraged schools to create TALULAR banks.



TALULAR bank at Malivenji

During school visits together with PEAs the CPDF saw some newly created, structured, well kept TALULAR banks, which are exemplary to other schools, like the ones at Chiskombe, Kavululanga, Malivenji, Mbalachanda and Mphofwa.

In Njuyu zone the centre school and Mlimo started TALULAR banks after the training at the TDC.

### TALULAR competition in Rukuru zone: a photo impression



Rukuru School, demonstrating a cinema box



Kasuma School, clarifying the game 'Ten Electric Numbers'



Lumemo School, explaining the use of an abacus



The jury, describing characteristics of good TALULAR

**‘Learners have difficulties with regrouping’**

Margaret Chibambo, PEA for Kafukule zone, contacted the CPDF about Mathematics in junior classes. She indicated that learners have a lot of difficulties with ‘Addition and subtraction with regrouping’ and ‘Long Multiplication and long division’. She asked the CPDF to come to her zone to train teachers of standards 3 and 4. Besides the indicated topics there should be attention for the production and use of TALULAR.

**TALULAR Quiz**

1. What does TALULAR stand for?
2. Give the main types of TALULAR resources. Notate your answers in the first column of the table below.

Type of TALULAR resources	Examples
1.	
2.	
3	
4.	
5.	

3. Give three examples for each type of TALULAR resource. Write your answers in the second column of the above table
4. Mention four benefits of TALULAR.

Benefits of TALULAR are:

◇

◇

◇

◇

*The above quiz formed the first activity of the TALULAR trainings at Njuyu and Chanyama TDCs.*

**Mathematics in junior classes**

January 2010 the CPDF trained Mzimba North PEAs and teachers of junior classes of Engucwini and Kafukule zones to improve their confidence in teaching ‘Addition and subtraction with regrouping’ and ‘Multiplication and division’ in standards 3 and 4

*Objectives:*

At the end of the workshop the participants:

- are able to describe pre knowledge and skills learners should have to add and subtract with regrouping
- can mention several strategies and tools to support learners in adding and subtracting with regrouping
- have created TALULAR for ‘Addition and subtraction with regrouping’
- can tell which pre knowledge and skills learners should have for long multiplication and division
- are able to describe several strategies and tools to support learners in multiplication and division

Mzimba North PEAs and teachers of Kafukule zone producing spike abacuses, using wood, nails and different colored bottle tops. The bottle tops model ones, tens, hundreds, thousands and ten thousands.



**Producing and using the spike abacus**

Esther Ng’oma, PEA for Engucwini zone, shared that teachers in her zone have gained knowledge about how to use the spike abacus in addition and subtraction and several ways to assist learners in memorizing the tables of multiplication.

The standard 3 and 4 teacher’s guides promote the use of spike abacuses during group work to model numbers, add and subtract numbers without and with regrouping, but teachers in Engucwini zone did not have and use these spike abacuses, maybe only one to demonstrate. During supervision the PEA noticed that teachers immediately went to a more abstract way of addition and subtraction. As a result of the CPDF training teachers now have sufficient spike abacuses for the groups in their classes. Esther Ng’oma: *‘Teachers and learners have really benefited from the training!’*

## /m/ lee/ /t/ versus m ea t

Based on her findings in the pilot project 'Kusambira kwizira mumasebero' (see pages 20 and further) the CPDF wrote a training 'English in infant classes', which she facilitated in Emchisweni zone. A lot of attention in the training went to the concepts 'phonics/phonemes', 'graphemes', 'decoding', 'encoding', 'segmenting' and 'blending'.

After a theoretical introduction the PEAs Jimmy Gondwe (Emchisweni) and Vincent Mhango (Enkondhlweni) plus the standards 1 and 2 teachers went into groups to segment words into their separate phonemes and pronounce these. PEAs and teachers, who were pleasantly surprised about the explanation of the phonics, took the segmenting and blending exercises very seriously. They made hand gestures to support the segmenting and blending processes. Some words, like box (/b/ /o/ /ks/), and queen (/kw/ /ee/ /n/), were indicated as difficult. Many teachers found the /w/ challenging to pronounce.

The training also paid attention to tools and games to support learners in the initial reading process. The CPDF girlfriend gave some background information, after which the participants in groups explored tools and games and later on developed tools from their own learners.

The CPDF and Emchisweni PEA will make follow up visits at school level, to see in which way teachers are implementing the above knowledge and skills in their classes.

### Monthly PEAs meetings

During the past two years the Mzimba North PEAs monthly met at the DEM's Office at Ekwendeni. Between 9.30h - 10h they had the possibility to drink a cup of tea together, having informal conversations. At 10h the chair person for that meeting asked one of the PEAs to start with a prayer. Subsequently the current secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting. These were discussed and amended. Then the other topics of the agenda passed in the revue. Some of them appeared on the agenda each month, like the district newsletter, sharing examples of good practice, news from the CPEA and upcoming dates. Others were non-returnable.

A few times the PEAs meeting was joined by members of the DEM's Office. Mr. Laurent Mwasikakata, the District Education Manager, attended twice to share relevant information with the PEAs. Mr. Nkhana, District Education Management Information Systems Officer (DEMISO), facilitated a session about record keeping in TDCs and schools.



PEAs discussing successes and challenges of their management committees during the May 2009 PEAs meeting using 'The Carousel' participatory method

## Sharing examples of good practice

*Sharing examples of good practice was a core element of the monthly PEAs meetings. Each meeting two PEAs presented professional development activities, which had taken place in their zone. Their colleagues asked clarification questions and gave feedback.*

Grace Chirambo (PEA St. Michaels) shared during the October 2009 meeting that the TDC had improved the TDC displays in the hall. The TDC painted all names of schools on the walls and then asked the school to fill their own space with educative displays.

November 2009 Bosco Shaba (PEA Emoneni) gave his colleagues information about the CPDs on teaching English, Maths and Social Studies, that he had facilitated to improve the PSCLE results in his zone. He also conducted lessons in clusters.

During the February 2010 meeting Weckson Mkandawire (PEA Mzlangwe) facilitated a session about Mathematics in standard 8, using participatory methods. His colleague Barroness Nyangulu (PEA Njuyu) demonstrated an interactive Science and Technology lesson for the same standard with small experiments.

### Implementation of educational changes

The August 2009 PEAs meeting one of the sessions was about 'Implementation of Educational Changes'. Fullan (2001, p. 69) describes implementation as 'the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into practice'

The PEAs had a closer look at characteristics of educational changes and the role they have in supporting the implementation of the new PCAR, which is an educational change.

Fullan describes nine key factors which influence the implementation of an educational change, like the PCAR: A. Characteristics of change: (1) Needs; (2) Clarity; (3) Complexity and (4) Quality/Practicality, B. Local characteristics: (5) District; (6) Community; (7) Principal / Head Teacher, (8) Teacher; C. External factors: (9) Government and other agencies



## Sessions 'Supervision' during PEAs meetings

During the November 2009 meeting the PEAs explored differences between inspection and supervision via statements like '*I will have an on-going relationship with this school. I will act as a critical friend*' and '*I will visit this school today as part of a team. We will look at all aspects of the school*'. They also analysed the current state of supervision in the district: strengths and areas of improvement.

During the January 2010 meeting the CPDF facilitated a theoretical session about counselling, reflection, the reflection circle of Korthagen (In: Kelchters,

mans, 2002, p.26), different types of questions, the sandwich model for feedback giving and diverse issues to be considered when carrying out supervision.

In groups the PEAs reformulated negative supervision statements into constructive statements.

Finally they had a look at - a by the CPDF filmed - feedback session between Agnes V.C. Msiska, PEA for Rukuru zone, and Grace Phiri, teacher standard 7 of Lumemo F.P. School. A feedback session between Barroness Nyangulu, PEA for Njuyu, and Agnes Msiska followed, in which

strengths and areas of improvement in relation to feedback giving of the Rukuru PEA were discussed. The PEAs applied the knowledge gained in the theoretical session.



PEAs, making notes while observing the filmed feedback session between the Rukuru PEA and one of her teachers

### Strengths and challenges of supervision in Mzimba North Education District

November 2009 the PEAs discussed strengths and challenges of supervision in the district. They indicated that quite some changes took place in the last year. The DEM's Office, which was saving money to purchase a vehicle, is now again providing fuel for supervision, which has increased the number of schools supervised monthly. PEAs agreed to supervise at least 4 schools per person each month. They all write supervision reports, which they submit to the CPEA. Patson Mtumbuka, CPEA for Mzimba North District since half 2008, has started monitoring the PEAs on the number of schools visited. Supervision tools are available. Motorcycles are serviced regularly.

Challenges mentioned are the amount of fuel provided and variation in report writing.

Although not described during the PEAs meeting: a good number of PEAs has problems with the motorbike. Some of them are not working at all - which means the involved PEAs hardly or not supervise the schools in their zones -, others have regular breakdowns - which makes that PEAs fail to attend meetings and/or trainings or come late - .

### Types of questions (Bradley, 2004)

Bradley (2004, p. 31) describes four types of questions for facilitators: open, closed, reflective and probing. The purpose of open questions like 'Tell me about ...' and 'How is school these days?' is to invite for conversation. Closed questions - like 'What difficulties do learners experience in maths?' - are meant to acquire specific information. Reflective questions check understanding of what has said: 'Could you explain...?' Probing questions seek an opinion or feeling: 'What is your view about participatory methods in large classes?'

Bradley's types of questions are not only useful for facilitators, but also for PEAs when they have feedback sessions with their teachers during supervision. Asking different types of questions enables them to have a two-way, future focused conversation with their teachers.

The CPDF will film several PEAs during feedback sessions with teachers. Afterwards the concerned PEA and CPDF will reflect on the feedback session. One of the points of attention are the questions that PEAs ask.

The sandwich model of feedback giving starts with positive comments, then gives constructive comments of tips and ends with positive comments

**Number of zonal INSETs increased due to CPDF Activities**

Patson Mtumbuka, CPEA for Mzimba North, says that due to the CPDF Activities the number of zonal INSETs in the district has increased: 'On termly review, term 2, 2009 only 2 specific zones were highlighted while for term 3, 2009, 12 specific zones have been highlighted with a lot of activities not highlighted.'

**Lack of finances main challenge for conducting zonal INSETs**

Insufficient TDC funds are the main reason for not conducting zonal INSETs at some TDCs. PEAs and management committees should therefore have a closer look at a structured way of fund-raising via for example contributions of schools and community members, hall hire, video evening and selling telephone units.

**Improved TDC Management (Output 2)**

The second output of the CPDF Programme is 'Improved TDC Management'.

Activities under this output are training in specific TDC management areas, Development of the TDC Best Practice Manual and Management of TDC libraries

Project indicators are:

- ⇒ Up to date records in the DEMs Office, TDCs and schools in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Effective TDC management committees in all TDCs in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Effective collaboration between PEAs and ACCOs in all TDCs in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Action plans being developed and implemented by PEAs in all TDCs in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Library management systems developed and implemented in the targeted districts

A TDC Monthly balance sheet shows at each moment of time which are the cash and bank balances.

The TDC management committee is accountable for the funds.

Month/Year		TDC Monthly Balance Sheet		Zone	
Date	Item	Money in	Receipt no.	Money out	Voucher no.
Balance brought forward					
8/1/09	Balance B/F	R2,200			
2/1/09	Travelling, Gondokoro	R2,000	00300		
14/1/09	Wall Constructions	R1,000	00301		
15/1/09	Water Bill		20033	R400	
20/1/09	Internet & Power WS		00302	R500	
20/1/09	Electricity Bill			R300	
23/1/09	Franchise	R1,200			
31/1/09	Wages (Wetmore)			R4,000	
Totals		R6,500		R4,900	

**Lesson Planning / Participatory Methods**

Mzuzu Diocese in cooperation with Irish Aid trained teachers of six schools in Mzimba North in Lesson Planning / Participatory Methods. The lesson plan format, as used, is an enrichment to PCAR and contains five developmental steps: 1. Question and Answer, 2. Book work, 3. Group work, 4. Reporting and 5. Consolidation

The CPDF, who heard from this initiative via the involved PEAs McDonald Chavinda (Lusangazi), Taniel Munthali (Mtende) and Grace Chirambo (St. Michaels) encouraged them to organize zonal INSETs for all the other schools in their zones to share this information. The CPDF assisted with refreshments and a contribution towards lunch.

The three TDC trainings were well attended and appreciated. Teachers of the schools involved in the Mzuzu Diocese project facilitated the trainings. Elements of the trainings were explanation of the lesson plan format, writing a lesson plan in groups and a demonstration lesson, in which the five developmental steps were included.

**Demonstration lessons**



St. Michaels TDC: step 1. Question and Answer



Mtende TDC: step 3 Group work



Lusangazi TDC: step 5 Consolidation

**TDC Monthly balance sheet**

Barroness Nyangulu, PEA for Njuyu, tells that he has started using the format of the monthly balance sheet, like was introduced and explained during the record keeping trainings for PEAs and ACCOs: 'Using the format introduced by Mariska, the TDC and the schools are able to account for every money being used.'



## Workshops 'Record keeping' and 'Fundraising'

The CPDFs facilitated workshops 'Record keeping' and 'Fundraising' for all PEAs in the two cluster centres Kapiri and St. Michaels.

Topics in these trainings were:

- different TDC records and persons in charge of keeping these
- TDC monthly balance sheets, consumable items stock ledger and permanent items stock ledger
- evaluations of the way various records are kept in their TDCs
- SMART objectives regarding record keeping in their TDCs
- causes and solution in relation to TDC finances
- current financial state of TDCs, ideal situation and steps necessary to reach that ideal situation
- spending TDC funds
- fundraising strategies
- teacher revolving loans

## 'This machine is magic!'

November 2008: in the DEM's Office there is one computer, which all PEAs can use for record keeping. Unfortunately none of the PEAs, who are very interested in working with the computer, knows how to handle the device. They all submit manual reports.

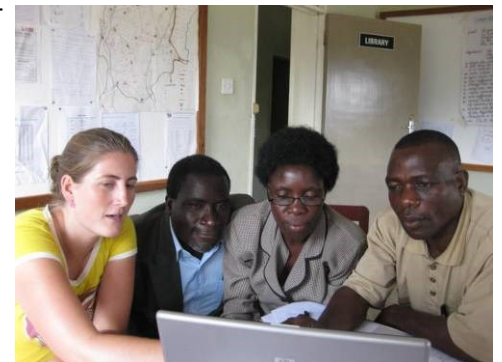
To address this need the CPDF trained the PEAs in groups of four on the use of Microsoft Word. In this training the participants learned how to start the computer and Microsoft Word, how to handle a computer when it is not in use, type texts in regular letters and capitals, use different fonts, change the size of texts, copy and paste sentences, save documents, use different bullets and numberings,

insert tables with different amounts of columns and rows, explain the functions of the different parts of a keyboard, structure a document, while using the TAB key, beautify texts by using Word Art, checking grammar and spelling via grammar and spelling control and switch off the computer.

The enthusiasm during the training was large. Brief moments of instruction were followed by practical assignments, in which the PEAs in pairs applied the newly gained knowledge.

Lusangazi PEA McDonald Chavinda, impressed by the possibilities of the computer,

put the feelings of his colleagues into words and rejoiced: 'This machine is magic!'



Taniel Munthali (PEA Mtende), Margaret Chibambo (PEA Kafukule) and McDonald Chavinda (Lusangazi) follow the instructions of the CPDF

### CONGOMA computers

The CPDF handed out forms to all PEAs, which enable them to apply for a computer with the Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA), which has computers available against a reasonable price.

Clement Zunda, PEA for Kapiri zone, tells how his TDC got electricity in the beginning of 2009. After receiving the CONGOMA form the TDC started raising funds and applied for a CONGOMA computer. The PEA, who is two years away from his retirement, is very enthusiast about the coming of the TDC computer: 'This computer will make our work easier!'

### Further practice

To encourage the PEAs to continue practicing and increase their skills in working with the computer the CPDF wrote three additional assignments for them, which have a direct link with the computer training and their daily work as PEAs:

1. Type an invitation for a head teachers meeting
2. Make a page for a zonal mock for standard 8 learners
3. Display the statistics of your zone in a table

Some small encouragement prizes will be handed out.

## The challenging existence of ACCOs

February 2008 the ACCOs notated the challenges they face in their work. January 2010 they had a look at the list they made two years ago: overloading of work, serving two masters at the same time, head teachers underrate our job, being underrated by some teachers, lack of trainings and workshops, no incentives, working during odd hours, lack of resources, monthly returns are done manually, poor communication facilities, lack of transport and keeping salaries without security:

In groups the ACCOs discussed whether changes had taken place, what could be done to the remaining challenges and which are the most urgent challenges at the moment.

The ACCOs concluded that some changes had taken place in some zones, for example by sensitizing head teachers on the roles of the ACCO, being invited to workshops, having reports being copied at Mzuzu instead of doing so manually and provision of salaries.

Some other challenges had changed little. Assistant coordinators are still overloaded with work. Many of them have the idea that head teachers underrate their work. They work during odd hours. 'Sometimes I'm called by the TDC while I'm in church,' one of the ACCOs remarked. They receive no incentives for the work they do.

The ACCOs indicated that they are cooperating well with their PEAs, who consider them as much as possible. They ACCOs explained that many of the challenges are highly related with the understaffing, which is especially severe in the more remote areas, an issue that should be dealt with at nation level.

### Some recommendations by Mzimba North ACCOs

Keplon Somba (ACCO Bulala) suggests that the government establishes the post of ACCOs to reduce the pressure of work

Griffin Myaba (ACCO Kapando) wants VSO to ask the government to consider sending more teachers to centre schools so that TDC activities should be carried out more effectively. He also pleads for frequent ACCO workshops so that PEAs should be more assisted in TDCs'

Stanley Mkandawire (ACCO Bwengu) prefers ACCOs to be confined to TDC activities only.

## Training ACCOs January 2010

### Objectives:

At the end of this workshop the ACCOs:

- have evaluated the way various records are kept in their TDCs
- have shared examples of good practice in relation to record keeping
- are able to fill in TDC monthly balance sheets, consumable items stock ledger and permanent items stock ledger
- have made a list of challenges they face in their work as ACCOs
- have formulated advice/a way forward in relation to those challenges
- have refreshed and/or gained knowledge about different parts of books, classification of books, different types of stock and the accession register (topics which were covered in the initial library training for ACCOs)
- can mention different ways of encouraging the use of the TDC library
- are able to mention different duties of a library committee
- can implement some activities and/or strategies to encourage the use of the TDC libraries
- are able to mention what should be displayed in TDC office, hall and surroundings
- can tell how to create effective, attractive and educative TDC surroundings



Mzimba North Assistant Coordinators after the January 2010 training at St. Michaels TDC

## Management committee trainings

The CPDF trained the following management committees of Mzimba North Education District: Enyezini (May 5th, 2009), Echilumbeni (July 21st, 2009) and Ezondweni (October 1st, 2009). The Kapando Management Committee had already been trained by the previous CPDF.

Objectives of the Management Committee trainings were:

At the end of the training the members of the management committee:

- ◇ can describe the purposes of the TDC
- ◇ Are able to mention the responsibilities of the TDC management team

- ◇ Can explain the hierarchy of the management committees
- ◇ Have identified problems, causes and solutions related to their TDC
- ◇ Have made a TDC action plan for the coming term

Besides the hosting PEAs the following PEAs attended one of the trainings and received training frames, flipcharts and markers for similar trainings in their own zones: McDonald Chavinda (Lusangazi), Margaret Chibambo (Kafukule), Grace Chirambo (St. Michaels), Bosco Shaba (Emoneni), Violet Ngoma (Luviri, Rumphi District), Boston Nyirenda (ACCO Mbalachanda), Alfred Sinda (Bwengu), Esther Ngoma (Engucwini), Samson Kanyimbo (ACCO

Enukweni) Patson Mtumbuka (CPEA), Barroness Nyangulu (Nyuju)

Input for the training was chapter 6 'TDC Management and the responsibilities of the Management Team' of the Teacher Development Centre Handbook



Members of the Echilumbeni Management Committee explore underlying causes and solutions of a challenge their TDC faces via a problem tree

### Enyezini TDC

In September 2009 Richard Jere (ACCO for Enyezini zone) on behalf of the Enyezini Management Committee submitted a report in which he indicated that the management had implemented the TDC action plan, that it had written during the training, facilitated by the CPDF in May 2009.

Directly from the start the Enyezini Teacher Development Centre lacked furniture for the office. Due to the Management Committee, which is now aware of her roles and responsibilities, this problem has been solved. The Management Committee raised funds to buy 'decent executive office furniture' and TDC curtains. 'I now even have a chair which I can turn,' PEA Qipase Nkosi said enthusiastically during the October 2009 PEAs meeting.

The Enyezini management committee also bought several chicks, which the TDC later on can use for welfare of participants during zonal INSETs.

### Involvement of Management Committees

May 2009 the PEAs discussed the strengths and challenges of their TDC Management Committees via the participatory method 'The Carrousel' (see page 6 for a picture of the method).

The PEAs indicated that those committees which were trained by the CPDFs were more willing, have more sense of ownership, know their roles, have a vision and have contributed money.

The committees which were not trained by the CPDFs or PEAs themselves, were mostly dormant.

PEAs described some challenges in relation to their management committees. TDCs often don't have sufficient funds to keep their management committees active - to provide refreshments, provide lunch, reimburse travel costs and/or pay allowances - . Therefore management meetings regularly have poor attendance and rely on the PEAs. Implementation of plans doesn't take place or only partly.

### Sensitizing Traditional Authorities (TA)

During the October 2009 PEAs meeting Mavuto Mtika, the PEA of Echilumbeni zone, shared with his colleagues that the Echilumbeni Management Committee had sensitized the Traditional Authorities (TA) in the area about the importance of the TDC. The result: sufficient funds to finalize the TDC and the house of the PEA. This enabled the PEA, who previously lived in Mbalachanda, to move to Echilumbeni.



## Library Training

*Mid 2008 the CPDFs trained all Mzimba North Assistant Coordinators (ACCOs) in library management in two clusters*

Elements of this training were:

- ◇ Library rules
- ◇ Record keeping
- ◇ Cataloguing
- ◇ Sharing strengths
- ◇ Lending
- ◇ Encouraging the use of the library
- ◇ Library committee: duties and responsibilities
- ◇ Making posters
- ◇ Evaluation

### Library books in Chanyama zone

Jakob Ngoma (PEA Chanyama) tells how his zone has received library books from the National Library: *'These will assist teachers and learners on the content of various subjects. Learners will be assisted quite a lot particularly std 8 learners to pass their exams'*



Stephen Ng'andu (ACCO Kapiri), Julius Kamdeuke (ACCO Enkondhlweni) and Resident Phiri (ACCO Mtende) making a format for an accession register and registering books during the library training at Kapiri TDC

## National Library in Mzuzu

Half 2008 the following eight TDCs did not have libraries: Chanyama, Emchisweni, Emoneni, Engucwini, Enukwini, Ezondweni, Lusangazi and Rukuru

Other TDCs, like Echilumbeni and Njuyu, did have libraries, but had a relatively small amount of books.

Assistant Coordinators of all the above zones plus Enkondhlweni, Kapiri, Mbalachanda and St. Michaels together with the CPDF went to Mzuzu to become members of the National Library there. After paying registration fees the ACCOs collected books for their TDC Libraries: novels and non-fiction for primary school learners, academic books for CDSS students and teachers in the zone plus novels and non-fiction for adults.

## Encouraging a reading culture

During monitoring visits by the CPDF it was found that many TDCs had displayed library rules and posters, opened and/or updated accession registers and loan books and organized the books in a logical way.

However, quite some ACCOs indicated that not many people came to borrow books: 'There is no reading culture'

Therefore, one session of the January 2010 ACCOs training focused on encouraging a reading culture. The CPDF described practical ideas of doing so: library displays, advertising the library, diverse competition ideas, creating a library committee, involving library monitors and putting a suggestion book in the TDC Library

# 'Tikutemwa kubelenga!'

'Tikutemwa kubelenga!' - which means 'We like reading!' - is a book promotion film the CPDF is working on. She started filming during the library exchange visit to Bulala TDC and Tjale F.P. School in May 2009. Afterwards the CPDF asked learners about their favorite books and interviewed PEAs and ACCOs about their TDC libraries and the importance of reading.

The CPDF will continue filming during the Book Promotion Activities at the new Chanyama TDC Library and Kapiri TDC Library, where ACCOs, teachers of the centre schools and CPDF will organize reading activities for learners of standards 7 and 8 of the two concerned schools to encourage a reading culture.

The film will be first shown during the combined PEAs and ACCOs meeting of May 26, 2010 at St. Michaels TDC

### Sensitization campaign at Enkondhlweni TDC

Julius Kamdeuke, ACCO and librarian for Enkondhlweni TDC, tells that back in 2008, not so many people came to borrow books at the TDC Library:

*'The Library training at Kapiri contained a good number of elements, like record keeping and how to attract more library users, e.g. by sensitizing them, making posters and organizing books in a proper way.'*

*After the training at Kapiri we started a sensitization campaign, because people did not know that there was a library at the TDC. Since then the number of library users has really increased.*

*Our TDC library is open on Monday and Friday afternoons. Especially learners from the centre school come. They can read the books they have borrowed in the TDC hall.*

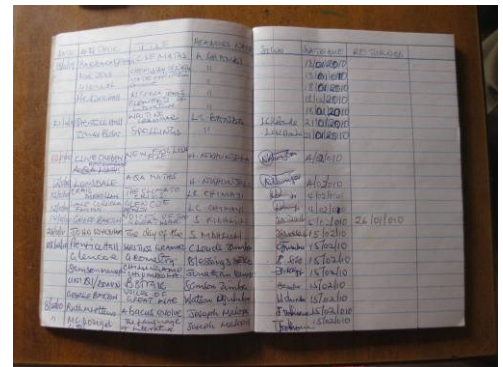
*A challenge we have is that it takes time to get new books if readers are interested in other stock, another supply of books.'*



Julius Kamdeuke, ACCO Enkondhlweni, registering books in the TDC Library loan book



Learners of Enkondhlweni F.P. School borrowing books at their TDC Library



Emchisweni TDC Library loan book



Balewa Mkandawire, ACCO Emchisweni zone, showing students of the nearby CDSS the TDC library rules

**Horowitz and Rembrandt**

Emchisweni is one of the five so called 'new' zones without TDC structures and PEAs house. Back in 2008 there is no library.

In April 2009 Balewa Mkandawire, ACCO for Emchisweni zone, together with the CPDF and ACCOs of Mbalachanda and St. Michaels, visits the National Library in Mzuzu. Since then a lot of work has been done in Emchisweni.

In February 2010 Balewa Mkandawire proudly shows Emchisweni TDC Library, which is based in the PEAs office, which recently moved from the CDSS to the primary school premises. Books are displayed on a table. *'This is temporarily. We've asked a carpenter to make shelves,'* the ACCO and librarian explains. Library rules have been written on a flip-chart. The books have been registered in an accession register. The loan book indicates that learners of the centre school, students of the nearby CDSS, teachers from the zone and community members have found their way to the TDC Library. Some students of the CDSS come to register for the library. The ACCO explains them the rules. The PEA, who is also in the library, shows the books he has borrowed: a novel from Anthony Horowitz and a non-fiction book about the Dutch artist Rembrandt.

## Improved networking among Teacher Development Centres and teachers (output 3)

The third output focuses on improved networking among Teacher Development Centres and teachers.

Activities under this output are the ongoing development of newsletters in the districts and exchange visits within the zones in the districts as well as with other districts in the country.

Project indicators are:

- ⇒ Newsletters developed and utilised for information sharing in the targeted districts
- ⇒ Exchange visits implemented in the targeted districts and action plans developed and implemented from the visits learning

### **'Even if you lack facilities, with the right attitude you can have success'**

*Lot Mhone, ACCO for the centre TDC St. Michaels, didn't join the initial library training half 2008, since he was not an ACCO by then yet. To gain more library skills he joined an exchange visit to Bulala zone in May 2009. During this exchange visit a group of PEAs and ACCOs visited Bulala TDC Library and Tjale School Library.*

February 2010 Lot Mhone reflects on the library exchange visit: *'It is an exciting memory for me'*. Lot says he was especially impressed by the Tjale School Library in Bulala zone: *'Even if you lack facilities, with the right attitude you can have success'*. He explains his statement: despite being in a rural area, Tjale School library is really ticking through joined efforts of teachers and learners. Lot Mhone further says that the way Tjale involved learners in the library management was an eye-opener for him.

After the exchange visit Lot Mhone opened an accession register for the books he had

collected at the National Library in Mzuzu.

He also set up a library committee, consisting of two boys and one girl from standard 7 of St. Michaels F.P. School. He trained them on their roles.

Now each Friday from 2-5 pm the TDC library is open for learners from St. Michaels F.P. School. The three learner librarians, who are now in standard 8, still assist Lot Mhone in the library duties.



Lot Mhone, ACCO for St. Michaels TDC

## Learners join library exchange visit to Mzokoto TDC Library (Rumphi District)

May 2009 Assistant Coordinators, teachers and learners of various zones in Rumphi District plus the zones Bwengu and Rukuru from Mzimba North District visited Mzokoto TDC and Mzokoto School Library during an exchange visit. It was the first time that learners visited other libraries. The children, which were excited about the trip, participated actively with their age mates in their own group.



Learner librarians from diverse zones in Rumphi and Mzimba North District listen to an explanation about Mzokoto TDC Library.

## Exchange visits first term 2009

The CPDF encouraged those that have had the chance to visit other zones to share their experiences to the whole group. Mrs Q E Nkosi shared her experiences in Bwengu. There was however heated debate as per the difference between the subject committee and subject panels. Mr M Chavinda also gave his experiences in Engucwini where quite a number of records were well kept and updated. Mr W C Mkandawire gave the experiences in Euthini. What impressed the visiting PEAs was that funds at the TDC were really a result of the sensitisation strategies to all stakeholders. All the moneys realised are then put into one coffer known as TDC funds. In order that borrowers are clearly recorded, there is a record book. The TDC also keeps a track of how the money is kept and used.

*Source: Minutes PEAs meeting April 2009, written by Taniel Munthali (Pea Mtende)*



## School exchange visit in Rukuru zone

On the 11th September 2008 head teachers and standard 1 teachers of Kalaza, Kapyolambavi, Lumemo, Rukuru and Vongo visited Kasuma School for an exchange visit. Also Esther Ng'oma, PEA for Engucwini, and a teacher from Engucwini School joined.

The participants observed lessons Chichewa and English in standard 1. M.N. Chavula had displayed learning and teaching aids on the wall: the alphabet – in small letters and capitals -, the numbers 1 – 20, a hundred field and a self made scale for weighing objects. After the lessons a feedback session took place, led by Agnes Msiska, the PEA for Rukuru, in which the teacher and participants discussed strengths and challenges of the observed lessons.

Afterwards the participants visited the office of the head teacher to have a look at the different school records and files.

Finally the participants observed the orchard, vegetable gardens, surroundings and the venue where the community was constructing a new school block.

## Organizing group work

Agnes Msiska, PEA for Rukuru zone, facilitated this school exchange visit, because she had noticed during supervision that the standard 1 teachers had difficulties in teaching languages.

After the Kasuma exchange visit she observed that standard 1 teachers of the five visiting schools had improved their teaching, especially their way of organizing group work, using group leaders and giving better instructions.



PEAs Kondwani Mbulo (Enukweni), Grace Chirambo (St. Michaels), the CPDF, Alfred Sinda (Bwengu), Qipase Nkosi (Enyezini), Esther Ng'oma (Engucwini) and McDonald Chavinda (Lusangazi) during lunch at Lusangazi TDC after the training 'Lesson Planning / Participatory Methods'

### Lunch

During all zonal trainings and exchange visits the participants had lunch together. The CPDF encouraged this by paying contributions towards lunch towards the hosting TDCs, who prepared the food, instead of giving money straight to participants to buy their food.

The CPDF thinks it is important to create a sense of 'being together' amongst PEAs and teachers which can be stimulated by joint activities like lunch. Besides: trainings should be evaluated according to their content and not the height of allowances. Although VSO does not pay allowances, PEAs, ACCOs and teachers kept coming to the diverse trainings.



Teacher M.N. Chavula in his classroom. On the 18th August 2009 he won the first prize in the Rukuru TALULAR competition (see page 4 of this report). The Rumphi CPEA, who was in the jury that day, invited M.N. Chavula to facilitate a session in a TALULAR training at Bumba TDC (Rumphi District) later that year.

## Continuing Professional Development Activities throughout the district

The CPDF developed and facilitated diverse CPD activities based on observations, conversations and needs analysis forms of TDCs, PEAs and ACCOs.

The CPDF made sure that she worked in all zones in the district. Most of the trainings she facilitated twice, once in Ekwendeni cluster and once in the Kapiri cluster. PEAs interested in the content of the training were invited to participate.

In this way trainings were not only trainings, but also exchange visits. Before and after the trainings PEAs and ACCOs had the opportunity to have a look at the library, records, TALULAR, displays and TDC surroundings. PEAs indicated that the coming of their colleagues encouraged them and their teach-



PEAs Clement Zunda (Kapiri), Jimmy Gondwe (Emchisweni), Bosco Shaba (Emoneni), Taniel Munthali (Mtende) and Weckson Mkandawire during the Chanyama TALULAR training

**Mzimba North District Newsletter** consists of Queen Ndaki (chairperson, PEA Ezondweni zone), Jimmy Gondwe (secretary, PEA Emcisweni zone), Clement Zunda (treasurer, PEA Kapiri zone), Barroness Nyangulu (contact person advertisements, PEA Nyuju), Stanley Mkandawire (editor, ACCO Bwengu zone), Grace Chirambo (typist, PEA St. Michaels), Julius Kamdeuke (typist, ACCO Enkondhlweni) and Mariska Westdijk (CPDF)



The district newsletter committee like gathered at a meeting at Kafukule TDC, the 15th August 2008

## Selecting articles

During a meeting in August 2008 at Kafukule TDC the district newsletter committee set the following criteria for selecting articles:

- ◇ Articles should come from as many stakeholders and zones as possible
- ◇ Each newsletter will have zonal updates of about three zones
- ◇ There must be a variety of texts and topics
- ◇ Newsletters should also contain jokes and brain teasers
- ◇ Articles must be educative
- ◇ They should also be short. If not, the committee has the right to edit and/or shorten them.

The CPDF will leave Mzimba North Education District in June 2010. Important is that the chairperson of the committee will take more responsibility for the logistics of producing the newsletter: contacting members to meet, checking the progress of typing and editing, encouraging zones to write articles, contacting PEAs to come up with zonal updates, reading the newsletter before it will be printed etc.

Besides it should be investigated in which way the DEM's Office could be involved in the District Newsletter: as well financially as by submitting articles.

## ZONAL UPDATE FROM MBALACHANDA.

### REPORT ON SUBJECT PANELS

After being oriented on the formation and organization of subject panels the PEA for Mbalachanda zone did not just leave matters in suspense, however, he had to take an initiative to come up with zonal subject panels.

This was so because results in the zone the graph seems to be going down. The idea of subject panels really seems to rescue the zone from drowning.

The PEA informed all the head teachers about the issue and later on set the date 15.03.09 as the day when to form the subject panels.

The procedure for the formation took the following into consideration:

#### **A. CHAIRPERSON:**

- (i) Be a subject teacher
- (ii) One who is quite knowledgeable, conversant and has an interest in that particular subject
- (iii) Well experienced and dedicated

**B. COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Teachers who have adequate knowledge about a particular subject

#### **Programme**

A programme was sent to enable the panels to be meeting regularly, twice per month, in order to share ideas.

#### **Challenges**

Mbalachanda zone being the most and severely understaffed zone, it was found that one teacher could be a member or chairperson in a number of subjects, which becomes just too involving.

#### **Way forward**

We are intending to incorporate volunteer teachers in these subject panels in the near future. Only those capable ones will be incorporated.

Thanks very much,

**D G Mbale**

**PEA Mbalachanda zone**

*Above article was published in issue 3 of the Mzimba North Education District Newsletter*

## Newsletter committee

*Mzimba North Education District Newsletter has been produced by a committee consisting of five PEAs, two ACCOs and the CPDF. Each of the committee members has his/her own role.*

PEA Queen Ndaki is the chairperson of the committee, who has chaired the diverse meetings. PEA Jimmy Gondwe, has made minutes of these meetings. PEA Clement Zunda is the one in charge of the finances. He keeps reminding all PEAs to contribute to the district newsletter. His financial records are well kept. PEA Barrones Nyangulu is the contact person for advertisements. He recently wrote a small article in which he invited NGOs to advertise in the newsletter.

ACCO Julius Kamdeuke is one of the typists of the newsletter. When he started 1,5 years ago, he had no knowledge of the computer at all. Now he is able to type articles in Microsoft Word at a good speed without help of others. He is motivated.

ACCO Stanley Mkandawire is the editor. He had some knowledge about Microsoft Word 1,5 years. At this point in time he can also use Microsoft Publisher. He is enthusiast and has done a lot of work.

PEA Grace Chirambo has recently replaced teacher Isabell Nyolwa as typist, who moved out of the district.

Although PEA Queen Ndaki is the formal chairperson of the committee, practically it is the two above ACCOs—supported by the CPDF—who do most of the work and coordinate the logistics of the newsletter. The two have done a tremendous job: *'Well done!'*

## Enhanced capacity of teachers to handle children with special needs education for the improvement of special needs education in the country (Output 4)

The fourth output is 'Enhanced capacity of teachers to handle children with special needs education'.

In August 2007 a Disability Toolkit Pilot took place in 5 districts: Mwanza, Zomba, Ntchisi, Chitipa and Lilongwe. In 2009 the Disability Toolkit should be rolled out in all targeted districts.

Project indicators are:

- ⇒ Each zone has at least one staff trained in the use of the Disability Toolkit
- ⇒ Training programmes established
- ⇒ Training programmes delivered to a teacher in the zone from 50% of the schools

## Annual budget

November 2009 the district newsletter committee met to make an annual budget for the production of the district newsletter. It was decided that the newsletter would be published termly. After taking all costs for the production process into account, it became clear that all zones should contribute 1,500MK per issue.

The newsletter committee also discussed alternative ways of financing the newsletter. Barroness Nyangulu was appointed as contact person for advertisements. NGO's working in Mzimba North District will receive a copy of issue 5 to get familiar with the newsletter.

## The Disability Toolkit

*'The Disability Toolkit was initiated and piloted by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Malawi in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. It has proved to be an effective tool for use by regular classroom teachers in providing educational support to learners with special educational needs.'* (Foreword Disability Toolkit by Moffart J. Chitimbe)

The Disability Toolkit is divided into ten sections: Introduction, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Physical Disabilities and Health Impairments, Developmental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Emotional and Behavioural Impairments, Dual Sensory Impairments, Standard forms and Referral Services and Glossary and Training Ideas.

Each section describes characteristics and causes of the concerned impairment, teaching strategies and suggested practical solutions to support learners with that specific impairment and guidelines for identifying.

Linked to the Disability Toolkit is an A4 envelope, containing smaller envelopes with colour bingo, sequencing sentences, picture flash cards, sequencing pictures, dominoes and tambala. There are also some other resources in the envelope, like a distant vision test, an A4 sheet with resource ideas, an alphabet chart and a sheet with names of colors, months and days.



### A register of zonal and school SENCOs

The CPDFs established a register of zonal and school SENCOs (=Special Educational Needs COordinators). Each zone in Mzimba North has two zonal SENCOs, who attended diverse SENCO trainings facilitated by the CPDF: an initial SENCO training plus two Disability Toolkit trainings. Besides all zones have school SENCOs: one per school. These school SENCOs were trained by their zonal SENCOs.

### Initial training for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)

The country wide roll-out of the Disability Toolkit took place in 2009. The register of zonal and school SENCOs in Mzimba North had already been made in 2008. The CPDFs trained all zonal SENCOs in that year on their roles and responsibilities. The zonal SENCOs afterwards trained the school SENCOs in their zones.

Elements of the initial training were ‘What is SEN?’, roles of a SENCO, different SEN, record keeping, action plan and progress report.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **Distribution of the Disability Toolkits** \*  
 \* Due to transport problems of the Ministry the CPDF collected the Mzimba North \*  
 \* Disability Toolkits and A4 envelopes personally (using private transport) in Lilongwe \*  
 \* and delivered them at the DEM’s Office in Ekwendeni. The PEAs collected the \*  
 \* Toolkits there and distributed them to the schools in their zones. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

### Disability Toolkit training 1

*Aim: Familiarisation of SENCOs with the structure and tools of the Disability Toolkit so they can use these to practically support SEN learners in their schools*

*Objectives:*

- At the end of the training the SENCOs:*
- ⇒ *have evaluated the previous SEN action plan*
- ⇒ *can mention the different sections of the Disability Toolkit*
- ⇒ *can use the different attached tools of the Disability Toolkit*
- ⇒ *have made cards with pictures, symbols and language for a daily timetable in their classes*
- ⇒ *have formulated a SEN action plan for the coming term*

### Disability Toolkit training 2

*Goal: Further familiarization with the structure and tools of the Disability Toolkit so that the toolkit can be implemented in the schools in Mzimba North District to practically support SEN learners*

*Objectives:*

*At the end of the training the participants:*

- ⇒ *can explain why it is important to state positive class rules*
- ⇒ *are aware of their own learning preferences*
- ⇒ *feel the relevance of using a multi sensory approach to learning*
- ⇒ *are able to demonstrate the use of the tools, described on ‘Maths Mat’*
- ⇒ *have made visual, auditory and kin aesthetic teaching and learning resources to support SNE learners in their classes*
- ⇒ *can mention and use different teaching and learning strategies to support learners with emotional and behavioural impairments*
- ⇒ *are able to describe and use different teaching and learning strategies to assist learners with learning difficulties*
- ⇒ *have evaluated the previous SEN action plan and made a new one*



**Zonal SENCO Dacoster Mkolongo** is the standard 7 teacher at Chimbon-gondo F.P. School in Enyezini zone (St. Michaels cluster).

A monitoring visit by the CPDF and Enyezini PEA in August 2009 learned that Dacoster cares about the SEN learners in his school and has **well kept SEN records**. He has recorded 27 SEN learners with different disabilities. For each learner he has indicated the level of affect on their learning. Each class has its own progress report sheet, on which is indicated which support the SEN learners receive.



**Zonal SENCO Annie Mumba** is deputy head and standard 1 teacher at Mzambazi F.P. School in Kapiri zone (Kapiri cluster).

When the CPDF and Kapiri PEA visited her in October 2009 they found a class full of **TALULAR** with Annie Mumba, who explains that sufficient teaching and learning resources are especially important for SEN learners.

Annie Mumba indicates that some tools of the Disability Toolkit (the coins and sequencing pictures and sentences) have been used in stand-ards 2 and 3 at Mzambazi.

## DISABILITY TOOLKIT TRAINING 2 FOR SCHOOL SENCOS AT KAFUKULE TDC

On the 3rd November 2009 Kafukule zonal SENCO Oblyn Chirambo and school SENCO Alex Nyirenda, who were trained by the CPDF at St. Michaels TDC, facilitated a second Disability Toolkit training for their fellow SENCOS in the zone. The CPDF also attended the training.

The turn-up was good, although many participants arrived late. Oblyn Chirambo and Alex Nyirenda facilitated in a cheerful way. They followed the training frame, as provided by the CPDF. Some sessions needed a lit bit more time, than indicated in the training frame. The participants were especially interested in the tools on the 'Maths Mat'. All SENCOS had identi-

fied SEN learners and recorded them, using the format as explained in the initial SENCO training.

The SENCOS invited the CPDF to visit them in their schools and observe some of the SEN learners.

After the training a group photo was made:



## Challenges

Zonal SENCOS and PEAs shared their concerns with the CPDF, when she made follow up visits to diverse schools in the district

Cynthia Mumba (zonal SENCO Enukweni) says that some schools in her zone are far from the TDC. Since the TDC has no funds to cover the transports costs of school SENCOS some did not attend all three SENCO trainings. Cynthia suggests to have the SENCO trainings in two clusters: at Embombeni and Enukweni.

Mary Nkhuna (specialist teacher and zonal SENCO Enkondhlweni) shares that implementation of the SEN Action plan, like made during the first Disability Toolkit training, is a challenge due to the heavy understaffing in the zone.

Weckson Mkandawire (PEA Mzangwe) indicates that some parents are hesitant to send their children to a special school. For other parents - he refers to a specific learner in one of his schools - the transport costs to such a school are too high.

## Daily timetable cards

During monitoring visits the CPDF discovered that most zonal SENCOS - due to lack of time - had eliminated the session 'Daily timetable cards' from the first Disability Toolkit training at zonal level.

Some zones however, like Emoneni, Engucwini and Rukuru had made the daily time table cards and/or posters:



Kasuma School (Rukuru), standard 1



Engucwini School (Engucwini), standard 7

**Zonal SENCO Kisa Masewo** is standard 7 teacher at the centre school in Engucwini zone (St. Michaels cluster)

During a monitoring visit in September 2009 by CPDF and PEA she indicated that the school had two deaf learners: a boy of 9 years old and a girl of 13 years old. She referred the two children to Embangweni School for the Deaf, where they were first tested. Both learners were accepted and are doing well now at Embangweni.

Kisa also referred a standard 4 girl to the hospital to have her eyes checked.



## Seating plans

All zonal SENCOS monitored by the CPDF in their schools, had identified learners with visual and/or hearing impairment and placed those learners in front of classes.

## Special Educational Needs Corner

In this issue 3 tips to support learners with emotional and behavioural impairments:

- ◆ Display a class timetable and try to follow it – if there are changes, try to give prior warning to the child.
- ◆ Emphasis should be on positive behaviour and praise should be given frequently for good behaviour.
- ◆ Allow the learner to tell you what makes him/her feel comfortable/uncomfortable in the classroom.

*For the next edition...*

*Please contribute any tips/strategies that you find useful for handling chil-*

## Pilot project 'Kusambira kwizira mumasebero'

The pilot project 'Kusambira kwizira mumasebero' - which stands for 'Learning through playing' - recognizes the importance of educative games in the teaching and learning process of children in Malawian primary schools as described by the Ministry of Education & Malawi Institute of Education in Journeys through PCAR (10): *'Games play an important role in the teaching and learning process especially for young learners. Various subjects can be taught through the use of games.'*

In this pilot project, in which four Mzimba North schools are involved, educative games are designed, developed and used for English in

standards 1 and 2 and Mathematics in standards 2 and 3.

Goal of the project is to support PEAs, deputy head teachers and teachers of four pilot schools in Mzimba North Education District in the design, production and use of educative games for English in standards 1 and 2 and Mathematics in standards 2 and 3 in order to give individual learners the support they need to come to their full potential, which is the main goal of the new Primary Curriculum & Assessment Reform the Malawian government is implementing

The CPDF has chosen for a pilot project to first explore the design,

development and use of educative games' in depth with a small number of PEAs, deputy head teachers and teachers before promoting this topic to more schools and zones after ending this pilot project. By having four different zones involved in this project the idea can relatively easily be communicated to other schools within those four zones and to the other seventeen zones in the district.

The four pilot schools are Chiskombe (Bwengu zone, Mathematics), Mbalachanda (Mbalachanda zone, English), Mtende (Mtende zone, English) and Rukuru (Rukuru zone, Mathematics)

### Selection procedure

The CPDF asked all PEAs to submit the name of a school which is active in development and use of TALULAR. She also requested the PEAs to indicate if the concerned school stores the TALULAR in a so called TALULAR bank.

After receiving the names of the schools the CPDF visited the following schools: Chimbongondo (Enyezini zone), Engucwini (Engucwini zone), Engolcolweni (Enukweni zone), Kasuma (Rukuru zone), Kavululanga (Mzalongwe zone), Kavuva (Kapando zone), Malivenji

(Lusangazi zone), Mbalachanda (Mbalachanda zone), Mphofwa (Emoneni zone), Mtende (Mtende zone), Mzambazi (Kapiri zone) and Chiskombe (Bwengu zone).

Finally the CPDF selected four schools based on these criteria:

1. Current availability and use of TALULAR in the schools
2. Venue of the schools: the selected schools must come from as well the Ekwendeni as Euthini cluster

3. Commitment of PEAs, head teachers and teachers of the schools to participate in this project

4. No other NGO active in the school, which is focusing on teaching and learning resources

5. Transport to the school: it must be possible to reach the schools as well in the dry as the rainy season

6. Communication to the PEA & school: the CPDF must be able to communicate by telephone with the involved PEA and school

### Activities

For as well English in standards 1 & 2 as Mathematics in standards 2 and 3 there are three workshops with eight participants each. The first workshop focuses on task analysis. The second workshop contains continued task analysis and production of educative games. The third workshop is mainly about the use of educative games.

Participants get homework assignments after each workshop. After the third workshop the CPDF and PEAs observe lessons, in which the involved teachers really use educative games.

The four PEAs all organize one activity at zonal level - a training or exchange visit—to brief other teachers in their zones.

The project will be described in the district newsletter.

Zonal SENCOs and PEAs will be briefed about the pilot project in a session in the final SENCO trainings.

The insights gained the CPDF describes in a manual 'Educative games', which will be distributed to all Mzimba North TDCs.



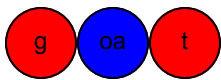
## Segmenting and blending

During the first workshop the PEAs, deputy heads and standards 1 and 2 teachers from Mbalachanda and Mtende schools made top 15-lists with the most difficult topics in English in infant classes. Since a large number of the indicated activities was related to 'Reading' the CPDF decided to have a closer look at the initial reading process with the participants in the second workshop.

The CPDF gave information about segmenting and blending via consonants, vowels and digraphs, using information from 'Sounds and letters' by Wainwright (2008). She illustrated segmenting and blending using words from pages 7 and 8 from the Standard 2 Learner's book, after which the participants practiced segmenting and blending themselves, using other words from the Learner's book.

The CPDF also explained and demonstrated tools for Word Recognition, Visual Memory, Auditory Memory, Visual Discrimination, Auditory Discrimination, Left to Right Orientation, Hand to Eye Coordination and Motor Control. The participants explored these tools in groups.

Via the individual evaluation forms it became clear that the participants had appreciated the sessions, but needed more time to grasp the new content fully to be able to implement it in their classes.



Using bottle tops with different colors (e.g. Coca Cola for consonants, Fanta Passion for vowels and Sprite for digraphs) to spell phonetic words

## Whole word approach and phonics in the PCAR

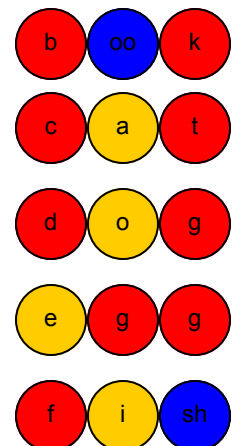
The PCAR combines the whole word approach / sight recognition and attention for phonics in the initial reading process of learners

Examples of activities, using the whole word approach are:

- ⇒ Standard 2, activity 1.4.2. Word recognition: 'Let them identify the words in pairs. Help the learners to read the words'
- ⇒ Standard 2, activity 3.6.3. 'Reading names of objects: 'When you mention an object, ask a member in each group to come and identify the name card and show it to the class'

Examples of activities with phonics are:

- ⇒ Standard 1, activity 8.1.1. Identifying sounds: 'Let learners identify the sounds of the first letters of the words that you say to them, e.g. 'axe', 'book', 'desk', 'foot'.
- ⇒ Standard 2, activity 1.3.2. 'Phonics': 'Introduce the sound of the initial letter 'a' in words such as apple, antelope, ant and axe'



## 'A serious issue, which should be addressed at national level as soon as possible'

Fullan (2001) says that educational changes often mean changes in 1. curriculum materials, 2. teaching practices and 3. beliefs or understandings about the curriculum and learning practices.

Looking at the way teachers in infant classes assist their learners in the initial reading process, there is clearly need for action. Curriculum materials - teachers' guides and learners' books - are present, but teachers are not using them the way they were meant to by the curriculum developers. Where the teacher's guide speaks about 'phonics' - the smallest units of sounds, like /l/ in leg, (put your tongue against the roof of the mouth) and /p/ in pen (a plopping sound with the lips) - the teachers treat them like alphabet letters in the ABC-song: /l/ becomes /el/ and /p/ gets /pee/. This means learners will never ever be able to blend words using phonics.

In other words: teaching practices and beliefs or understandings about the curriculum and learning practices of the teachers differ from the ideas of the curriculum developers. There is an enormous gap between the written curriculum and the implemented curriculum. The issue of the phonics is a very serious issue, that should be addressed at national level as soon as possible, preferably via initial and continuing teacher training. It concerns the initial reading process of children, which is essential for their further development. Children, who are not able to read, will not be able to understand topics in other learning areas and function to their full potential in society. Failure to read will also increase their change of drop-out.

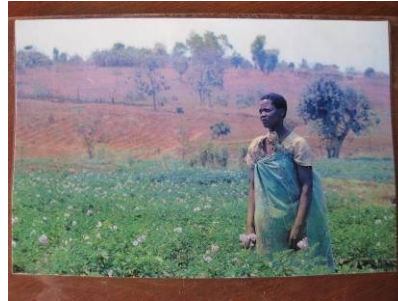
I urge you to take this issue very seriously. It might also be good to consider the development of tools, which support the reading process, at national level.

### Using local games in teaching English

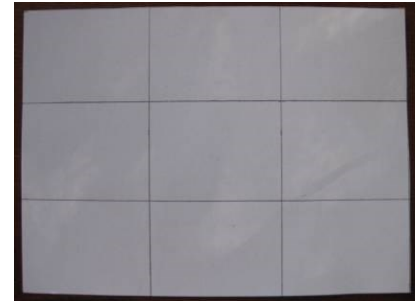
1. The game is PHADA
2. The rules of the game:
  - The player is not supposed to step on the line
  - If the player wins a house, other are supposed to jump that house
3. This game is played during:
  - lessons e.g. expressive arts
  - their free time
4. It can be used when reading words e.g. by drawing PHADA and write words on it and then ask learners to read the words and the learners which have failed to read the words he/she is out of the game

Submitted by Mtende F.P. School and demonstrated by Mexon Maonga, deputy head during the second workshop

## Making self assessing puzzles



1. Take a post card or cut a picture from a magazine or newspaper



2. Turn the picture and divide the paper in nine equal cells.



3. In each cell write or draw a question



4. Cut along the lines, so that you have nine cards

### Kim's Game

You need one chitenje and ten objects for this game, e.g. a pencil, a ruler, a pen, a pair of glasses, a pair of scissors, a book, a paper, a ball, a cup and a sharpener.

#### Activity 1.

- ◇ Let the learners name all the objects by asking 'What is this?'
- ◇ Ask the learners to have a good look at the objects and memorize them
- ◇ Cover the ten objects by a chitenje
- ◇ Ask the learners to mention the ten objects

#### Activity 2.

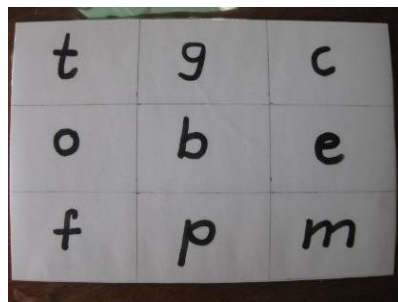
- ◇ Let the learners name all the objects by asking 'What is this?'
- ◇ Ask the learners to have a good look at the objects and memorize them
- ◇ Cover the ten objects by a chitenje
- ◇ Ask the learners to close their eyes or turn
- ◇ Remove one object
- ◇ Take away the chitenje and ask the learners: 'Which object is missing?'



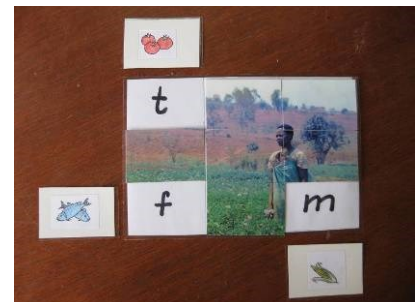
5. Take a piece of paper. Cut it into the same sizes as the picture.



6. Divide the blank paper in nine equal cells.



7. Write the answers on the questions in the right cells (mirror wise)



8. Take a card. Put it upside down on the right answer. Do the same with the other cards. If you are correct, the puzzle will be complete.

### The 15 most difficult topics in Mathematics standard 3

During the first workshop Mathematics the PEAs, deputy head teachers and standards 2 & 3 teachers analyzed the topics for Mathematics in standards 2 and 3. For both standards they came with a top-15 list of most difficult topics. Below you find the ones for Mathematics standard 3:

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Unit</u>
1. Adding numbers with sum not exceeding 600 with regrouping	5
2. Subtracting numbers within the range of 0 to 600 with regrouping	6
3. Ordering numbers from 601 – 999	7
4. Modeling the multiplication of numbers by 6	11
5. Introducing fractions; modeling fractions; writing fractions; ordering fraction	14
6. Multiplying numbers by 7	10
7. Division of numbers by 4 and 5	12
8. Estimating and measuring length of objects using non-standard units; Measuring length and height of regular and irregular objects	21
9. Setting time in hours; writing time in hours; writing half past the hour	24
10. Interpreting physical and picture graphs	27
11. Comparing masses of different objects; Ordering objects according to mass	23
12. Modeling numbers using spike abacus	1
13. Introducing numbers from 301 – 600	4
14. Addition of numbers not exceeding 999 with regrouping	8
15. Subtraction of numbers within the range of 0-999	9

### ‘Teaching in a more interesting way’

Taniel Munthali, PEA for Mtende zone, says his zone has benefited from the pilot project: *‘In this project the teachers are encouraged to use locally available resources coupled with local games. These activities have actually assisted Mtende School teachers to teach in a more interesting way.’*

### ‘Games motivate learners’

Teachers of Kasuma F.P. School (Rukuru zone), who participate in the pilot project Mathematics, are enthusiastic: *‘Games motivate learners. They also simplify the concepts. They help learners remember the concepts. Besides they boost the seven intelligences (SEN)’*



The spike abacus, on which the number 638 has been modeled: 6 hundreds, 3 tens and 8 ones.

Different colors have been used: yellow (H), orange (T) and red (O)

## ADAPTATIONS

August 2009 the CPDF wrote the project proposal for the pilot project ‘Kusambira kwizira mumasebero’ including time frame and budget.

The project proposal, which indicated September 2009 - May 2010 as time frame, was approved by the VSO Programme Office in Lilongwe.

When the message came that DFID would stop funding the CPDF programme per February 2010, that had consequences for the budget and activities of the pilot project. The CPDF had to adapt the project content due to funds, which were promised but no longer available.

## Diverse games



Workshop I English: Mtende teachers play a memory game, displaying animals



Workshop I Mathematics: Bwengu participants play a bingo with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums



Workshop II English: Mbalachanda participants play a lotto game, containing English words from standard 1



# HIV/AIDS competition

Are you a learner of standard 5, 6, 7 or 8? Yes? Then you can also write an English composition about the topic **HIV/AIDS!** Submit your composition to your PEA before the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2009. The jury will reward the writer of the best composition in each zone a prize and will also hand out prizes to the three overall winners of the district.

Some guidelines for your composition:

- it should have between 200 and 400 words
- make sure you capture the attention of the reader in the first paragraph
- divide your composition in paragraphs, which all deal with another aspect of the topic
- use signal words, e.g. 'also', 'and', 'but', 'therefore' and 'finally' to support the

the structure of your composition

- describe your own view in relation to the topic
- mention activities your school and/or the community do to raise awareness
- explain what people can do to avoid HIV/AIDS

Write a final paragraph in which you summarize or give a conclusion

We are looking forward to reading your compositions!

The newsletter committee,

English teachers are requested to give their learners further guide lines for the composition

*Article from Mzimba North Education District Newsletter issue 3, May 2009*

## Intensive travelling



ACCOs Balewa Mkandawire (Emchisweni) and Julius Kamdeuke (Enkondhlweni) travel with the CPDF to Mbalachanda TDC for a SENCO meeting



PEA Alfred Sinda (Bwengu) plus deputy head teachers and standards 2 and 3 teachers of Chiskombe F.P. School travel with the CPDF to Kasuma F.P. School (Rukuru)

## HIV and AIDS

(..) It is the responsibility of everybody to address this pandemic so that we can have an HIV and AIDS free society. We should not only leave this duty to Non Governmental Organizations, but also each individual should take an active part in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Let's have free discussions with our children at home on issues of HIV and AIDS.

*Fragment from article, published in district newsletter issue 4, by A.K. Ngwira (Luzi F.P. School, Bwengu zone)*

## Mother groups Kapando

*Kapando zone, headed by PEA Veronica Lozi, is one of the zones with mother groups trained by the PEA, supported by CRECCOM.*

During a SENCO monitoring visit to Kapando zone the CPDF met one of the mother groups. An interesting conversation - partly in Chitumbuka, partly in English -

developed when the gathered mothers wanted to know from the CPDF - 'Since you are a role model!' - about the ways mothers in the Netherlands encourage their daughters to continue their education.

The mothers asked the CPDF to return to Kapando TDC to share more ideas with them.

## Encounters in the VSO vehicle

*Since Mzimba North is a vast district, the CPDF placement contained a lot of travelling. This cost a lot of time and energy, but also led to interesting encounters between the CPDF, PEAs, ACCOs and teachers, who travelled in the VSO vehicle together.*

On the way many open, interesting, two way conversations took place. Some of the issues discussed were quality of education, salaries and working conditions of teachers, having fields versus buying products in shops, the value of marriage, interaction between husband and wife, having children, religion, HIV/AIDS, water management in the Netherlands, poverty, ideas about Europe in Malawi and the image of Africa in the Netherlands.

## Marco Borsato, hagelslag and cycling

During her stay in Malawi the CPDF has gained a lot of knowledge about the country and her people, for which she is very grateful. But who do the PEAs know about her home country The Netherlands? During the February 2010 PEAs meeting the PEAs participated in a quiz about the Netherlands.

1. Many Malawians think that all 'bazungu' speak English. What is the home language of most people in the Netherlands?
2. The western part of the Netherlands is under sea level. What has the country done to protect her inhabitants?
3. Listen to the music. These are the Dutch artists Marco Borsato and Ali B.
  - A. What are they singing about?
  - B. Which types of music, which are popular in the Netherlands, do you hear?
4. Look at the objects and pictures: what are they and what are they used for?

*The CPDF had brought hagelslag (A) plus pictures of a wind mill (B), auction clock (C) and haring (D).*

5. The Netherlands are very serious in education of their children and young people. Hereby some questions about education:
  - A. Do learners in the Netherlands wear a uniform?
  - B. What will happen after the standard 8 test?
  - C. Which are average working times of teachers?
6. Suppose, you visit the Netherlands for an exchange visit. You travel by bicycle / push bike.
  - A. At which side of the road do you cycle?
  - B. You are on a straight road. You come to a junction. A vehicle is approaching you from the front and wants to go left. You want to go straight on. Who goes first? Why?
6. During the exchange visit you visit some schools and a teacher training college. Today you have a meeting with one of the lecturers at 9h. You are a little bit late and arrive at the teacher training college at 10h.
  - A. What do you expect will happen?
  - B. What do you do?



Quiz about the Netherlands for PEAs:

Question 4.A  
What is it and what is it used for?

### Nkhukhala ku Malawi

February 2010 an article of the hand of the CPDF with the title 'Nkhukhala ku Malawi' - which means 'I live in Malawi' was published in 'Trefwoord', a magazine for religious education for primary schools in the Netherlands.

In this article the CPDF described her work as VSO volunteer in Malawi for Dutch learners of standards 5 to 8.

Learners, who wanted to know more, visited the weblog [www.menm.waarbenjij.nu](http://www.menm.waarbenjij.nu) to read stories and have a look at pictures. Several standards left a message for the CPDF on the weblog.

### School

The CPDF raised awareness in the Netherlands for the following communities in Mzimba North District, which are improving the infrastructures of their primary schools: Chankhomi (Mtende zone), Kavisopho (Kapando zone) and Maumba (Mzalongwe zone).



February 2010 the CPDF could order 190 iron sheets: 60 for Chankhomi J.P. School, 60 for Kavisopho F.P. School and 70 for Maumba F.P. School. Fundraising was done by members of the CPDFs home church, a primary school in the Netherlands and individual family and friends: 'Yewo chomenel'

### Infrastructure

In the 40 days before Easter 2010 the children of the CPDFs home church will pay attention to her work in Malawi. The children will raise money for desks (weeks 1-3) and iron sheets. (weeks 4-6). The desks will go to Kasuma (Rukuru zone), the iron sheets to Kabira (Emchisweni zone)



## End of VSO placement as CPDF

First of all I would like to thank all PEAs, ACCOs, community members and learners I've met for making me feel at home in Mzimba North Education District: *'Yewo chomene! Your positive attitude and enthusiasm made that I've enjoyed my time in the district. You all kept me motivated!'*

I sincerely regret that my VSO placement as CPDF in the district will end the 31st May 2010.

Looking at the objectives of the CPDF Programme I think it would have been good if the placement had continued to encourage the implementation of diverse activities. Putting new ideas and/or activities into practice, takes time. They should get meaning first. Some elements, which could be addressed in an additional CPDF year, would be:

- o Further training of PEAs and infant teachers on teaching English in standards 1 and 2
- o Encouraging and monitoring TALULAR production and use in schools
- o Continuous assessment
- o Further training of PEAs and deputy head teachers on organizing CPD activities at school level
- o Investigation of further steps to keep management committees motivated
- o Further promotion of the use of TDC libraries
- o Coaching of the district newsletter committee on the logistics of producing newspapers
- o Helping the district in setting up a resource centre for SEN-learners
- o Continuation of the pilot project 'Kusambira kwizira mumasebero' in other zones
- o Finalizing the manual 'Kusambira kwizira mumasebero'

## Literature

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**Dear PEAs, ACCOs, teachers,  
community members and learners:  
"Thank you for your enthusiasm.  
I will never forget you! Yewo!"**

## Request for support of remote areas

Finally I would like to ask attention for TDCs, PEAs, ACCOs, schools and teachers in those zones in Mzimba North, which are in remote areas. I want to encourage all educational stakeholders to invest more time and money in the remote areas. Educational staff there works in very challenging circumstances: heavy understaffing, double shifts, poor school infrastructures, leaking houses, no running water or electricity and less shops than in urbanized areas. Please, let's give them the moral and financial support that they need so much!