

# VSO VOLUNTEER REFERENCE

*Completed in Malawi by Patson P.F. Mtumbuka, Coordinating Primary Educational Advisor (CPEA) for Mzimba North Education District*

## ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Volunteer name:</b>                                      | Mariska Westdijk  |
| <b>Volunteer's job title:</b>                               | Continuous Professional Development Facilitator (CPDF)                    |
| <b>Name and address of volunteer's employer:</b>            | Mzimba North District Education Office<br>P.O. Box 50 Ekwendeni<br>Malawi |
| <b>Name/job title of Staff member completing reference:</b> | Patson P.F. Mtumbuka<br>Coordinating Primary Educational Advisor (CPEA)   |
| <b>Dates of volunteer's placement:</b>                      | June 2008 – May 2010  |
| <b>Date of completing reference:</b>                        | The 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2010   |

## DETAILS OF SERVICE

### Relationship with volunteer:

- Have known the volunteer for a period of 2 years, i.e. from 2008 – 2010
- For Primary Education Advisors meetings once every month
- For other trainings, meetings and arranging for programmes as CPEA in contact more 3 or 4 times. Yet she was residing far away outside our district

### Main duties undertaken by the volunteer:

- Conducting monthly Primary Education Advisors Meetings
- Training PEAs on inspection and supervision skills, how to conduct continuous professional development activities, how to train subject panels, how to manage Teacher Development Centres, how to training TDC Management committees, how to handle Special Needs issues
- Trained Assistant TDC Coordinators on their roles and how to manage TDC Libraries
- Trained teachers on how to handle some subjects like Maths and English more effectively
- Trained teachers on special needs education
- Improved networking among TDCs and teachers through the establishment of the newsletter and through exchange visits

## SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS

| Headings   | Excellent   | Good                                | Average                  | N/A                      |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Level of professional / technical competence                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>Always came thoroughly prepared with teaching resources and used varied participatory methods. There was always high mastery of content to cover.</i>  |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to work as part of a team                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>She would comfortably fit in the team of teachers, the team of PEAs, the team of district management including District Education Manager (DEM)</i>  |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to adjust to new tasks, situations and challenges            | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   |   |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to accept personal responsibility and work on own initiative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>Was confident in carrying out decisions and activities and where necessary was doing effective consultations with appropriate persons</i>  |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to lead and motivate others                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>Was always punctual, timed programmes. Because of thorough preparation her meetings or trainings were live throughout.</i>   |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to communicate effectively                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>Programmes were communicated in advance. Reminders through phones were made. She preferred greetings in local language. Interested in cultural issues and share to us some cultural issues of Holland.</i> |                                     |                          |                          |
| Ability to negotiate and persuade                                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>She worked with me as CPEA closely to ensure that both VSO and district activities were going on smoothly without collision.</i>   |                                     |                          |                          |
| Commitment, enthusiasm and positive attitude                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>   | <i>Was always committed as demonstrated through her preparation and punctuality for activities. She always wanted successful work.</i>  |                                     |                          |                          |

| Headings                     | Excellent   | Good                                | Average                  | N/A                      |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Resilience and determination | <input type="checkbox"/>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>             | <i>The fact that she was operating far away outside the district and Mzimba North is a very wide district she never showed a disappointed face. Always happy with her work.</i> |                                     |                          |                          |
| Reliability                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Comments:</i>             | <i>Although operating from far, was always available in time to various stakeholders except for reasons beyond her control, e.g. illness, car problems.</i>                     |                                     |                          |                          |

### KEY STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Her trainings had been effective in all the 4 (four) outputs ie Improved CPD activities, Improved TDC Management, Improved networking and Special Needs Education hence:

- Increased number of zonal based in service trainings and other professional activities
  - Improved performance of both teachers, Assistant TDC Coordinators and PEAs
  - Revamped TDC Libraries where they were dormant
  - Improved TDC management
  - Improved handling of Special Needs learners
  - Establishment of district newsletter
  - Acquirement of computer knowledge and skills amongst various stakeholders
- NB Personally from Mariska, I have learnt:
    - to be punctual
    - to facilitate using varied effective participatory methods
    - to be serious with what one is doing
    - some aspects of Netherlands culture amongst other issues
  - According to her profession, she was/is really fit for Continuing Professional Developments activities for teachers.
  - May God bless her.