

# **Child Rights & Classroom Management (2008-2009) SIDA**

**Country Team: Malawi**

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**Project Title: Reducing Dropout rate  
due to pregnancy**

**Mentor: Ulf Leo**

# Outline of Final Project Report on CRC

## 1. Local background to the Project

Sexual reproductive health is a new phenomenon in Malawi. Interventions by NGOS and Government have been mainly top down approaches which have not really reached the intended target (the learner). Dropout rate in and around Mkanda area in Mchinji District has been alarmingly high and it is the intention of this project to intervene with a bottom upward approach. The methodology to be used in this case is to start with the baseline survey in the most said affected areas. This will help to tackle the root cause and translate it into sensitization in the described activities above. The main idea is to encourage the learner to forge ahead with education and abstain from promiscuous behaviour that can lead to teenage pregnancy and contract of HIV and AIDS and STIs'.

## 2. Formulation of the Problem. Aim and Objectives.

### Aim

- To increase access and equity to quality education of learners through retention. This is in line with Millennium Development Goals, Malawi Growth & Development Strategy (MGDS) and National Educational Sector Plan (NESP).
- To promote Child Rights with regards to the right to education.

### Specific Objectives:

By the end of this project it is expected that:-

- There will be an increase in learners enrolment
- Reduced dropout rate due to pregnancy
- Increased awareness in Child Rights by all stakeholders
- Learners will acquire knowledge on sexual reproductive health and life skills
- Schools to have functioning Human Rights clubs focusing on child rights
- Improved pupil performance at National Examinations.

## 3. Implementation of the Project

### 3.1. Task:

- To reduce drop out rate due to pregnancy.

### Target groups:

- Students (Girls and Boys) Lilongwe Girls Secondary School and Mkanda Secondary School.
- Teachers / Head teachers
- Parents / Community ( Local and Religious Leaders)

### Limitations:

- Poverty

- Peer Pressure
- Low self-esteem among girls
- Mixed social economic backgrounds
- Lack of adequate boarding facilities
- Lack of adequate teaching and learning materials
- Lack of positive role modelling

### **3.2. Choice of Methods**

- Sensitization through meetings with the target groups
- Use of media, radio and TV
- Drama and sketches
- Song and dance
- Poems .

These were chosen to be performed during the awareness campaign and the launch of the project.

Another method was to choose Local NGOs, and others whose welfare is youth such as UNICEF and Guidance , Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) for material and financial support.

The first step was to meet the Head teachers of the two schools and discussed with them on the problems at hand. (Dropout due to pregnancy). The other stakeholders in the sensitization process were students , parents (PTA), local and Religious leaders.

It was agreed to have an awareness campaign at Mkanda Secondary School and participants in the activities were all the stakeholders.

### **3.3. Collection of Data / Material**

#### **Methods:**

During the baseline survey the following categories were interviewed:-

#### **School management team;**

This included the head teacher, Deputy head teacher, Heads of sciences, Languages and Humanities and class teachers. They were asked questions according to questionnaire and responses are available on appendix 8.1 (A). The exercise was carried out in both schools, targeting seven people per school.

#### **Learners;**

Random sampling was done through class teachers and learners based previous experience on sexual reproductive health. Amongst them were former school drop outs due to pregnancy and other reasons.

Oral interviews were carried out individually, face to face and groups discussions on issues related to sexual reproductive health and pregnancy. Facts and myths about sexual reproductive health were discussed in group interviews. Cases studies were presented by two of formers school drop outs who are now re-admitted in school. See Appendix 8.1 (B ).

### **Community members and local leaders**

The community members were sampled from the parents teachers association (PTA). Local / religious leaders such as the Chief, Group Village Headmen, Pastors and Sheiks were involved.

Oral interviews were administered separately then focus group discussions and responses were given as in appendix 8.1 (C ).

### **Materials:**

- Questionnaire
- School records
- Statistics on dropout rate from Ministry of Education Science & Technology

### **3.4. Participants in the Project Work**

- Learners
- Teachers
- Parents
- Local and Religious leaders

### **3.5. Resources for the Project**

Financial and material resources the pilot project were sourced locally from the departments of the Change Agents and the targeted institutions. It is the wish of the Change Agents to seek financial and material support from various well wishing International Organisations, NGOø or any possible donor working in the same area.

### **3.6. Drawing up a work plan and Time Table**

Date	Institution	Target group	Methodology
27/06/08	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology	Principal Secretary for Education	Brief report of the CRC Training in Sweden and Project Plan
2/07/08	Lilongwe Girls Secondary School	School management team	Brief presentation of CRC and the Project focus and plan
09/07/08	Mkanda Secondary School	School management team	Brief presentation of CRC and the Project focus and plan
26/07/08	Baseline survey for	• Headteacher &	• Questionnaire



	Lilongwe Girls Secondary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers</li> <li>Learners &amp; peer Health educators</li> <li>Community, parents, Local &amp; Church leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus group interviews/ discussions</li> <li>Scrutinize documents &amp; records</li> </ul>
05/08/08	Baseline Survey Mkanda secondary School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Headteacher &amp; Teachers</li> <li>Learners &amp; peer Health educators</li> <li>Community, parents, Local &amp; Church leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaire</li> <li>Focus group interviews/ discussions</li> <li>Scrutinize documents &amp; records</li> </ul>
14/08/08	Resource mobilization - proposal writing	Mercy, Ernest, Grace	Proposal writing
20/08/08	Meeting with TVM and ZBC for possible inclusion for awareness campaign in the already existing programmes which promotes the rights of children. And getting quotations for an on going radio programme that can highlight the findings of the project and possibly feedback from the listeners.	Projects officer ZBS, Programme Manager Television Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings &amp; sensitization</li> <li>Discussions</li> <li>Arrangement of possible plans suggestions</li> <li></li> </ul>
05/09/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNICEF</li> <li>Ministry of Education Science &amp; Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Officer UNICEF</li> <li>Principle Secretary (MOEST)</li> <li>Director of Planning (MOEST)</li> </ul>	Submission of project proposal for possible funding for awareness campaign
10/10/08	Chinsapo Sec Sch	Change Agents	Report writing
24/10/08 - 05/11/08	Zambia Lusaka and Livingstone	Change Agents	Follow up workshop with Mentors and Change Agents
19-20/02/09	Lilongwe Girls Sec Sch Mkanda Sec Sch	Change Agents School Administration Community	Preparation for launching awareness campaign
16/03/09	Division Office	Change Agents	Preparation of Mentors Visit to Malawi
22/03/09 – 29/03/09	Lilongwe, Mkanda and Salima	Mentor – Ulf Leo and Change Agents	Visit project sites, launch of awareness campaign and discussion on the way forward with our Mentor
27/04/09 – 29/04/09	Chinsapo Secondary School	Change Agents	Preparation of Final Report
01/04/09	Central West Education Division	Change Agents	Cont. of Final Report

08/06/09	Central West Education Division Offices	Change Agents	Finalisation and Submission of final Project Report
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## 4. Outcomes of the Project

### 4.1. Pilot Project

#### ➤ Sensitization

This is the time when we met the school administration, community and students separately. This was aimed at introducing the our project and area of concentration. The main tools were the questionnaires. However, there were a lot of questions, doubts, misconceptions etc from the focus groups. For instance, some learners believed that they could not do without having boys/girl friends at school. Some parents doubts whether they could probe into other childrens bad behaviour or just ignore everything.

#### ➤ Baseline survey

This is the time when the change agents prepared questionnaires in the following order.

Ernest: for Head teachers and Teachers.

Mercy: For parents and local leaders

Grace: for learners

The main idea to get detailed and first hand information about sexual reproductive health, guidance and counselling within and outside the school. And also to get answers to questions, clear doubts, myths , beliefs and some misconceptions the targeted groups had concerning sexual reproductive health and re-admission policy.

#### ➤ Awareness campaign

The information collected from the baseline survey was translated into corrections for the myths, beliefs and misconceptions in form of drama, poems , sketches songs and dance performed on the awareness campaign day to the learners, teachers, parents local and religious leaders and other stakeholders within the project area.

#### ➤ Launch

The launch aimed at reaching all the stakeholders in one meeting. It took place during our mentor's visit at Mkanda Secondary School in Mchinji. People present at the launch were invited to inspect a building which served as a girls' hostel outside the school. The T/A for the area and some Religious and community leaders were among the invited guests. Then the gathering went inside the school premises where the PTA is constructing a girls hostel to tighten security for the female students who are the most vulnerable group in the area.

The school presented a life Skills lesson which depicted some issues of sexual reproductive health and decision making. The last part of the launch was a mixture of speeches, dances, poems, drama and case studies of some students who dropped out of school. In one of the case studies, a female student shared her

testimony on how she suffered and survived during pregnancy and treatment after delivery. Nonetheless she is back in school and wishes to complete her education with the help of the school administration.

The PTA staged a play showing some of the bad practises by the community which encourage teenage pregnancy and problems which single parents face in raising their children.

In her speech, the Head teacher for Mkanda secondary School described the initiative by change agents as a positive one since the rate of dropouts is gradually dropping and students knowing more about sexual reproductive health issues.

#### **4.2. After the pilot project**

Monitoring and evaluation through checking on enrolment, availability of active child rights clubs, teaching of Life Skills and improved pass rate at National Examinations.

#### **4.3. Full Implementation of the Project**

- The project seeks to have the following in place:-
- Functioning Human / Child rights clubs in the targeted schools
- Offering Life Skills as a subject to be time tabled
- Running TV and Radio programmes on Child Rights
- Networking with both the targeted others schools, Local and Religious leaders NGOø, Organisations and previous Change Agents.

### **5. Evaluation or Assessment of the Results of the Project**

The project so far has developed positive attitude towards the importance of education and the way of life of the community has turned positively to support rather than distract. The following have been noted:-

#### **5.1.High retention**

The targeted schools have recently registered reduced drop out rates. The baseline survey revealed that before the project the drop out rates at Lilongwe Girls and Mkanda Secondary Schools were 4 and 12 per year respectively. After sensitization and the launch, the monthly enrolment returns show improved retention and less drop outs on other reasons. Lilongwe girls and Mkanda Secondary Schools have registered 2 and 6 drop outs due to pregnancy respectively as compared to 2 and 8 before the intervention of the project. It must be noted that cases of drop out due to pregnancy are reducing.

## **5.2. Change of negative attitude towards promotion of girls' education**

The involvement of parents during the intervention has motivated the community and the learners to the effect that there is no discrimination in sending their children to school regardless of sex. Previously girls were regarded as less important than the boy child on school matters. Interviews with parents revealed that they would rather send a boy rather than a girl where they did not have enough money for fees. Issues of early and forced marriages for girls were common as a solution to transfer responsibility to the man marrying their daughter.

## **5.3. Increased enrolment**

Due to improved retention of pupils and change of attitude towards girls education enrolment for both boys and girls has increased. Now the school operates on full capacity. for example, at Mkanda they have a total enrolment of 400 learners from that of 323.

## **5.4. Re-admission of drop-outs has increased**

Currently learners and parents of the targeted schools are aware of the re-admission policy by the ministry of Education, Science and Technology. During the launch we had case studies from teen mothers who gave testimonies of their experiences and are now re- admitted into school. This has prompted some drop outs to apply for re-admission into school the coming academic year. Parents have taken it up in the sensitization of the community. For instance, they participate fully during the launch through sketches and drama depicting corrections from the negative practices of their society.

## **5.5. Establishment of functioning Child rights clubs**

As evidenced on the school time table and calendar of events, the targeted schools have functioning child rights clubs like, Human Rights, Why Wait, Guidance and Counselling and Peer Health Educators.

## **5.6. Teaching of Life Skills as a core subject and counselling programmes in the targeted schools.**

Previously life Skills was not being offered despite it being in the curriculum for secondary school education. Now it is a core subject and examinable at national level. The intervention of the project has seen the targeted schools scheduling and teaching life Skills.

## 6. Conclusions

Generally most of the short term objectives have been achieved as indicated in the report. However, there are a number of challenges and constraints which the project is facing such as :-

### **Lack of financial support.**

The project requires more donor support to reach out the other schools. The resources will be used for sensitization, monitoring activities which will take place in the schools and development of infrastructure to curb drop out rates due to pregnancies.

### **Lack of transport and accessibility to the project site due to poor roads**

There is great need for a reliable and strong vehicle readily available for the project. The vehicle will be used for monitoring and evaluation of the project activities.

However the project aims to reach out to the remaining (169) schools in the Central West Education Division by the year 2012 and to all schools in Malawi by the year 2015 funds permitting. It is our wish to achieve this goal through the same approach used in the pilot project.

The project seek sustainable mechanisms of the same in the targeted institutions. This is to be implemented by capitalising on the already existing structures and policies.

## 7. References

## 8. Appendix

### **8.1. All used Instruments e.g. Questionnaires**

#### **1. Baseline Survey**

The baseline survey was done in both targeted areas in three categories. The target groups were as follows:

- Headteachers & teachers
- Learners
- Community

#### **A. HEADTEACHERS & TEACHERS - ERNERST**

##### QUESTIONARE FOR HEADTEACHERS AND TEACHERS

1. What has been the drop out rate for the past 3 years?
2. What are the most common causes of the drop out rate?
3. What has been the drop out rate due to pregnancy?
4. How do you handle cases where a girl or boy has been found pregnant or responsible for  
Pregnancy respectively

5. Are there guidance and counseling services in the school
6. What are most problems among pupils for guidance and counseling/
8. Do you teach life skills?
9. How frequent is life skills taught in a week?
10. Are there clubs and societies for child rights?
11. What mechanisms can be put in place to reduce drop out rate due to pregnancy
12. What are the factors encouraging drop out rate at;
  - a) Home
  - b) School
13. a) What do you know about readmission policy?  
b) Are pupils aware of the readmission policy?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The questionnaire was administered through interview of individual respondents

## **FINDINGS**

### **Lilongwe Girls Secondary School**

- Four pupils dropout per year
- Common causes of dropout include : pregnancy, poverty and negative altitude
- Two pupils drop out due pregnancy
- Procedure of case of pregnancy include: counseling, report writing, letters of withdraw from the pupils
- Guidance and counseling services are available
- Pupils are not open to seek assistance for counseling
- Life skills is taught two times a week
- Teachers are aware of the readmission policy
- Factor which encourage pregnancy
  - At home are, peer pressure, misconceptions of human rights, orphanage, rape, TV.
  - At school, peer pressure, poverty
- Some pupils are aware of the policy informally

### **Mkanda Secondary School**

- Twelve pupils dropout per year
- Common causes of dropout include : pregnancy, poverty and negative altitude
- Eighth pupils drop out due pregnancy
- Procedure of case of pregnancy include: report writing, letters of withdraw from the pupils
- Guidance and counseling services are not available
- Pupils are not open to seek assistance for counseling
- Life skills is taught once a week
- Teachers are aware of the readmission policy
- Most pupils are not aware of the readmission policy
- Factor which encourage pregnancy
  - At home are, peer pressure, misconceptions of human rights, orphanage, rape.

- At school, peer pressure, poverty
- Some pupils are aware of the policy informally

## **B. LEARNERS - GRACE**

### **SECTION A**

1. Name of School:.....
2. District:.....
3. Type of School:.....
4. Sex:.....
5. Age:.....
6. Form:.....

### **SECTION B**

7. Have you been oriented / trained on Child Rights and Sexual Reproductive Health?  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you learn any of the above in Life Skills?  
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.....  
.....

9. Have you ever dropped out of school?  
.....  
.....

- 10.If YES; what was the reason? If NO; proceed to question 14  
(*Tick the appropriate answer below*)

- a. Illness
- b. Financial hardships
- c. Pregnancy

- 11.If ( c ) was the reason, how did you get yourself re-admitted into school?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. What are common problems you are facing?

- a. At home  
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.....  
.....

- b. With fellow students  
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- c. With teachers and Administration

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....

13. How often do you get Guidance and Counseling at school?

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....

14. Do you have Guidance and Counseling Patrons / Matrons at your school?

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 .....  
 .....  
 (If NO, who do you approach or consult if you have issues which may require some guidance and counseling?)  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

15. Which other organizations apart from your school offer some Guidance and Counseling services at your school?

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....

16. Are students aware that they can be re-admitted into school after dropping out of school due to pregnancy?

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 .....

17. What would you recommend in order to decrease the drop out rate due to pregnancy in schools?

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 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
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 .....

### **Findings:**

#### **Mkanda Secondary School**

- No time tabled orientation on child rights and sexual reproductive health.
- No Life Skills due to shortage of teachers
- Only 2% reported dropping out of school in the past reasons being illness and poverty.
- Guidance and counseling done through other forums very often
- Other organizations which help in Guidance and Counseling are Forum for African Women in Education in Malawi (FAWEMA)
- Some students are aware of re-admission policy while others have no idea.

#### **Lilongwe Girls Secondary School**



- There is orientation on Child Rights and Sexual reproductive Health in form of clubs and Peer Health Educators.
- Life Skills is taught as a subject.
- No one reported ever dropping out of school when responding to the questionnaire but records showed three of them having dropped out of school due to pregnancy.
- Guidance and Counseling is done through other forums and also to a very large extent by the Guidance and Counseling Patrons and Matrons.
- Others organizations which help in Guidance and Counseling are FAWEMA, GCYDCA, Conflict Resolution and Country Minders, CAYO, and many more.
- Students are aware of the re-admission policy.

### **Face to face discussions with learners at both schools on challenges facing dropouts due to pregnancy**

#### **A. At home**

- Discrimination
- Parents / guardians anger
- Financial hardships
- Child care hardship e.g anti and post natal

#### **B. With fellow learners**

- Unconscious negative remarks during lessons
- Discrimination
- Lack of proper assistance when facing problems in day to day activities

#### **C. With teachers and administration**

- Negative remarks
- Being reminded that they are parents
- Lack of emotional/ psychological support

### **Recommendations from both schools**

- Boys to be involved in sexual reproductive health sessions
- The law on drop outs to be put into practice
- Need for a lot of role modeling from form one up to form four
- Exchange visits by schools to act as an eye opener to rural schools
- Educational visits to be encouraged
- Career fairs to be revived at school level

### **C. COMMUNITY – MERCY**

### **METHODOLOGY: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

#### **TARGET GROUP;**

- Parents
- Religious leaders
- Local leaders

### **See questionnaire below**

1. What is the rate of dropouts due to pregnancy in this community?

1990:.....  
 1995:.....  
 2000:.....  
 2005:.....  
 2007:.....

2. Give as many examples of these cases I this community.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

3. Cite common causes of dropouts due to pregnancy in this community.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

4. Are you aware of CRC?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

5. Suggest ways in your mind that can correct the situation.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

6. What other efforts are in progress to help reduce the situation?

.....  
 .....  
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 .....

#### **FINDINGS FROM THE COMMUNITY:**

1. Dropout rate per year

	LILONGWE GIRLS SEC SCH (URBAN AREA)	MKANDA SEC SCH (RURAL AREA)
2008:	1 – 2	>10
2005:	2 – 4	10 -12
2000:	4	14 -15
1995:	6	<17
1990:	7 – 8	> 17

- The decrease in dropout rate over the years is due to knowledge of family planning but sexual activity is very high.
- Peer pressure is one of the factors that increase the rate pregnancies.
- Form one girls are the most affected because they stay idle for over four months waiting for the next academic year from basic to secondary education according to our school calendar.

## **2. Cited cases of pregnancies**

### **Mkanda**

- Self boarding encourages promiscuous behaviour
- Hostels built outside the school premises and far close to the trading area leaves girls unmonitored.
- Poverty

### **Lilongwe Girls**

- Some girls jump over the fence.
- Fake sickness or funerals to get permission to go out.
- Some girls smuggle sachets of beer & cell phones in the hostels
- Poverty

## **3. Causes of pregnancies according to the community**

### **Mkanda**

- Most girls face financial hardships
- Parents culturally do not open up to speak openly to their children about sexual reproductive issue; instead children get wrong information from their peers and older women.
- Community believe opposite sex relationships without sex is not real.
- Some parents are very to receive gifts from men dating their children.
- Some parents force their children into early marriages by giving negative remarks to those who are still in school.
- There is no follow up of school issues by some parents and guardians.
- Abuse of social life during market days at the trading centre in Mkanda.
- Child labour still exists especially at Mkanda.
- Students cover long distances when going to school and there are inadequate boarding facilities at Mkanda.
- Some teachers or prominent members in society have the tendency of proposing school going children and also give constant negative remarks.

### **Lilongwe Girls Secondary School**

- Wrong information of their rights and freedoms which leads to disobedience by some students.
- Democracy teachings as contrary to the original cultural teachings has loosened the value of discipline.
- Exposure to pornographic material encourages sexual activity among girls.
- The community feels that the introduction of subjects that contain sexual reproductive issues like Life Skills encourages promiscuity.
- Freedom of dress and no emphasis of uniform and style loosens values and behaviour.
- Transfer of students from private to government school pollute the system.

## **4. Awareness of CRC**

- Most of the people in the community are aware of CRC but there is some sort of negativity towards it.
- In some communities there is abuse of child rights due to resentment of the whole thing.

## Pictorial focus of the Launch



Posters about the launch



Girls boarding under construction



Headteacher: Mkanda Sec. Sch.



Part of the audience during the launch



Case study by one of the drop outs  
Re-admitted into school



One of the sketches during the launch



Girls dancing during the launch



Ulf taking to one of the visually impaired