Full Term Evaluation of the Integrated School Performance Improvement Review and Engagement (INSPIRE) Project

Final Report for
Link Community Development International

February 2019
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>District Education Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEP</td>
<td>District Education Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAS</td>
<td>Directorate of Inspectorate and Advisory Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAS</td>
<td>Education Methods Advisory Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoM</td>
<td>Government of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIZ</td>
<td>German Technical Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSET</td>
<td>In-Service Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSPIRE</td>
<td>Integrated School Performance Improvement, Review and Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITE</td>
<td>Initial Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCE</td>
<td>Junior Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCDM</td>
<td>Link Community Development Malawi (often referred to as Link)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGTSC</td>
<td>Malawi Government Teaching Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIE</td>
<td>Malawi Institute of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSSSP</td>
<td>Malawi School Support System Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrolment Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSTED</td>
<td>National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODL</td>
<td>Open and Distance Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCAR</td>
<td>Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEA</td>
<td>Primary Education Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEMA</td>
<td>Principal Education Methods Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSIP</td>
<td>Primary School Improvement Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLCE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIAS</td>
<td>Support to the Inspection and Advisory Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAP</td>
<td>Sector Wide Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>Teacher Development Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC</td>
<td>Teaching Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Teacher Training College</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report documents an independent evaluation of the Integrated School Performance Improvement Review and Engagement (INSPIRE) project covering the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2018 plus a six-month extension period until 30th September 2018.

The aim of INSPIRE project is to improve the performance of Malawian schools and the impact of the Malawian Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) and District Education Offices (DEO) on school performance, by improving integrated planning, multi-stakeholder accountability and the provision of effective support.

Innovations of the project were to include:

- A school report card system enabling access to a wide range of school performance data to inform school planning;
- Development of a Schools Integrated Information System (SIIS) database to store inspection and advisory data, and an application for mobile data entry; and
- Dissemination of the National Education Standards in the local language, Chichewa.

APPROACH

The evaluation made use of a combination of methods, reflecting the study aims, the range of stakeholder groups, and the resources available. The main methods included:

1. Desk Review - analysis of existing baseline surveys, monitoring data and evaluations of the main groups supported by the project;
2. Stakeholder consultations - face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected key stakeholders;
3. Survey research with a key group of beneficiaries (Head Teachers); and
4. Case study research with a small number of participating schools.

STRATEGIC FIT AND CONTRIBUTION

The project goals are strongly aligned with Link, Malawi Government, and Scottish Government policies, and the rationale for the project remains valid.

PROGRESS TOWARD TARGETS AND INDICATORS

The project has met the majority of logframe targets, within budget, and with progress against all but one of the others (where no data was available). However, at the impact level, high levels of learner repetition remain a problematic issue.

Attribution of benefits to Link at the output level is likely to be high (i.e. these benefits are unlikely to have been achieved without Link intervention). At the impact level (i.e. wider benefits), as anticipated, it the view of this report that the attribution of the logframe impact indicators is moderate – i.e. these high-level benefits to learners are unlikely to be fully attributable to Link due to the widespread influence of other interventions.

MANAGEMENT CONTENT & DELIVERY

The management, content and delivery of the project has been effective, reflecting a flexible and responsive approach with stakeholders. The findings suggest that significant progress has been made in the
implementation of School Reviews and associated activities at District level in Mchinji and to a lesser extent Dedza, and at the national level in the close working relationships and capacity building with DIAS.

Of particular significance, is the approach to partnership working at national and district levels, which has helped to match the project to the needs of stakeholders. Limitations of the project at secondary school / divisional level are noted.

The development of the approach within primary schools at District level is progressing and the project has played a leading role in influencing the development of the school improvement process, further roll-out of which now falls to DIAS.

The sustainability of the approach developed is subject to the ownership and continued commitment and roll out by Malawi authorities. This report identifies a high degree of ownership and commitment by MoEST and DIAS to sustain the work of the INSPIRE project through national rollout. However, the widespread establishment of the approach across Malawi is a work in progress and will require significant ongoing resource.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OVERALL AIMS & OBJECTIVES

There is evidence for a range of significant benefits being experienced by participant schools as a result of the application of the School Review approach (including governance, teaching practice, community engagement and learner performance). This is a very encouraging result given the relatively short duration of the INSPIRE project. These benefits remain to be confirmed in the official education statistics, but there was consistent support for the view across a range of stakeholders within Mchinji and Dedza.

The School Review methodology and the use of the NES to support school improvement were widely considered to be effective. In addition, community and learner empowerment featured strongly in consultation with stakeholders, particularly in the case study evidence (presented in more detail in section 3.4), suggesting widespread and systematic engagement with parents and learners in the development of school performance.

However, a strong theme to emerge from the fieldwork was the importance of the challenging wider economic context in which stakeholders and projects operate and which is viewed as a significant barrier to full and effective implementation of the NES and associated school improvements within Mchinji, Dedza and more widely across Malawi.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The project demonstrates good value for money in a number of ways. Perhaps most significantly the project has provided a thoroughly piloted model for national adoption and rollout of the School Review approach and associated data collection and monitoring tools (while further embedding the NES, advisory and inspection processes). Given the pressing need for education improvement in Malawi and the scale of investment in the sector by the Government of Malawi (as a share of national wealth), it is important that that investment is channelled to the best effect. The INSPIRE project has made a significant impact in that regard, and this influence is likely to be sustained if officials are able to match resources to their commitments.

Available monitoring evidence reports that the project was effective in targeting beneficiaries by gender. However, future projects should explore procedures to monitor gender and other relevant characteristics (e.g. categories of disadvantage) across a wider number of logframe indicators (e.g. those for Output 2 training activities).
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that future projects systemically check all logframe indicators for viability and where feasible develop alternative measures as a back-up in the event that key measures are not available;

2. It is recommended that consideration is given to the inclusion of both gross and net indicators in future project monitoring where this is proportionate (it is noted that subsequent Link projects are adopting methods that permit this type of analysis);

3. For projects with a large technical component, seek to establish committee structures that don’t unduly slow down decision-making (e.g. a main committee delegating some decision-making to a technical sub-committee);

4. In any successor activities, work with DIAS and other relevant departments such as Secondary and Planning Directorates too further understand, support and resolve difficulties in engaging secondary schools and divisional stakeholders in the school improvement process;

5. In any successor activities, consider, where resources permit, providing a ‘follow-up pack’ for the Simulation Game, that can be retained by schools for in-house consolidation of skills;

6. In any successor activities, work with DIAS to develop a means for further developing and maintaining the SIIS database, including an online, ‘live’ functionality;

7. Continue dialogue with appropriate NGOs and other donor partners to continue to support the Government of Malawi in this policy area, in order to ensure the gains from the SIAS and INSPIRE projects, and the momentum behind the process, is not lost;

8. Enhance efforts to document the gender of beneficiaries and other relevant categories of disadvantage (e.g. attendees at meetings/ training events);

9. While learner performance has improved overall, repetition rate remains higher than target. This suggests that stronger learners are improving their performance, but the weaker learners are still being left behind. Further investigation is recommended to understand to what extent school or home factors influence this, and what can be done to ensure all learners are improving.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report documents an independent evaluation of the Integrated School Performance Improvement Review and Engagement (INSPIRE) project covering the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2018 plus a six-month extension period until 30th September 2018.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

1. To determine the performance of the INSPIRE project against project objectives, including
   a. Inputs, activities, outputs, outcome and impact;
   b. The extent to which targets have been reached;
   c. The strategic fit and contribution to Government of Malawi and Scottish Government objectives and to the Sustainable Development Goals;
2. To determine any wider impacts of the INSPIRE project in relation to the overall project aim;
3. To determine if the intervention has put in place mechanisms to ensure sustainability;
4. To determine the effectiveness, efficiency and overall value for money of the project;
5. To determine the success of the management and delivery arrangements, highlighting any improvements that may be considered, including partnership arrangements; and
6. To determine any other lessons learned and any recommendations for future delivery (considering the findings of the mid-term evaluation).

Appendix Table 1 in Appendix A confirms those sections of the report dealing with each of the evaluation questions.

1.3 INSPIRE PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.3.1 Link Community Development (Link)

Link is a group of international non-governmental organisations (NGO) committed to helping improve education delivery in developing countries, in partnership with national, regional and local education departments. Link facilititates projects that build the capacity of schools and increases access to quality education for communities in rural areas.

Link in Malawi was established in 2006 and works in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Dedza and Mchinji District Education Offices to improve the quality of education in Malawi.

1.3.2 Project Background

The aim of INSPIRE project is to improve the performance of Malawian schools and the impact of the Malawian Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) and District Education Offices (DEO) on school performance, by improving integrated planning, multi-stakeholder accountability and the provision of effective support.

The project aims to support the Malawi Ministry of Education Science and Technology to develop and demonstrate a consolidated district school monitoring and support system clarifying the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders.

This project, informed by learning from Link Malawi’s district projects in Dedza and Mulanje, was the first to target all schools within Mchinji District, providing data to enable integrated planning at school, district and
national levels. Integrated planning was intended to lead to better targeting of scarce resources and more effective interventions to support schools, resulting in an improvement to the quality of education which schools deliver and improved learner outcomes.

Innovations include:

- A school report card system enabling access to a wide range of school performance data to inform school planning (with innovation in terms of design to permit communication to those with low literacy levels);
- Development of a Schools Integrated Information System (SIIS) database to store inspection and advisory data, and an application for mobile data entry; and
- Dissemination of the National Education Standards in the local language, Chichewa.

A successful application to the Scottish Government for a 6-month project extension to September 2018 was made (1st April 2018 to 30th September 2018). The main activities to be included in the extension were (Link 2018, Application Form for Proposed Up To 6 Month Project Extension: April - October 2018, pp1-2):

- **Output 2**
  - Training for 48 education officers in Mchinji and Dedza Districts on running an enhanced School Review which caters to marginalised stakeholders, including revised School Management Simulation Training (aligned to National Education Standards).
  - Mentoring and intensive training on the Schools Integrated Information System (SIIS) database and tablet application for 57 education officers to ensure sufficient capacity within government structures to facilitate accurate data input, analysis and reporting, as well as the capability to train staff in other districts.

- **Output 3**
  - School Review in 96 schools in 6 zones in Mchinji to provide comparison data on the schools in the first cohort in order to measure improvements in performance against the National Education Standards.
  - School Review in 28 Secondary Schools in Dedza District to further test the School Review process for Secondary Schools developed in Mchinji District in Year 3 of the INSPIRE Project. Having data from all Secondary Schools in two districts will enable the Ministry of Education to make comparisons to inform planning.

- **Output 5**
  - Radio programmes on national and local stations covering Mchinji and Dedza districts to raise awareness of the National Education Standards and opportunities for community members to hold schools accountable for achieving these standards.

1.3.3 Findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation

A mid-term evaluation of the INSPIRE project (covering the period April 2015 to November 2016) found that the project met or was on track to meet eight out of nine logframe milestones (target March 2017) for which data was available at the mid-point of the project; and that the additionality of key output indicators was high, and these benefits are unlikely to have been achieved without Link intervention.

Wider benefits to other stakeholders, including school staff, communities and learners, are also evident despite the early stage of implementation and the long-term nature of behaviour change.

Significant progress was found in the establishment of an integrated system of school planning from school to district and national levels, with multi-stakeholder accountability established at various levels of the process. Evidence was also presented of the establishment of a consolidated system of monitoring and support for schools.
Several recommendations for the development of the project were made, including:

- Review of targets for the remaining project phase;
- Further transferring ownership of the project activities to stakeholder’s; and
- Integrating School Reviews with the existing School Improvement cycle and School Improvement Planning; and
- Promoting investment of sufficient training and resources to ensure sustainability of project gains.

1.4 REPORT STRUCTURE

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 – Methods;
Chapter 3 – Findings;
Chapter 4 – Conclusion & Recommendations; and
Appendices.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH

Alastair McPherson (Evaluation Study Director) worked with the Link team in Malawi and Edinburgh to develop an approach to meet the assignment aims and objectives.

The evaluation was structured as a participatory process, with beneficiaries involved in the investigative process, and engaging with key stakeholders at national, district, zone and school levels.

The main ways in which stakeholders were engaged included the following:

1. Opportunities to shape the evaluation approach;
2. Opportunity to provide evidence as part of the evaluation process, for example, through individual interviews, surveys, and focus groups;
3. Opportunity to provide feedback on draft evaluation findings; and
4. Access to evaluation findings via dissemination of reports and presentation of results.

The five main research phases included:

1. Inception Meeting;
2. Desk Review of Background Information;
3. Stakeholder Consultation and Benchmarking;
4. Analysis and Initial Feedback; and
5. Final Reporting.

2.2 PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE

Our approach to the evaluation was informed by the project theory of change/ logic model, which pointed to the main benefits expected from the project and the main ways in which change was intended to be brought about (these are summarised in Appendix B). As such the Theory of Change / logic model informed the focus of the evaluation questions used in, for example, stakeholder interviews.
2.3 EVALUATION METHODS

The approach made use of a combination of methods, reflecting the study aims, the range of stakeholder groups, and the resources available. The main proposed methods included:

1. Desk Review - analysis of existing baseline surveys, monitoring data and evaluations of the main groups supported by the project;
2. Stakeholder consultations - face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with selected key stakeholders;
3. Survey research with a key group of beneficiaries (Head Teachers); and
4. Case study research with a small number of participating schools.

2.4 DESK REVIEW OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A detailed review was made of background documentation relating to the project including project plans and approval papers; monitoring data (permitting, as far as possible, the profiling of activities, outputs and beneficiaries); relevant strategy/policy documentation; and available socio-economic baseline statistics providing the context of the project.

These documents included:

1. INSPIRE original full proposal and amendments agreed with Scottish Government;
2. INSPIRE reports to the Scottish Government;
3. Background documentation such as MoEST policy documents;
4. Any other relevant monitoring or evaluation data (including the 2017 mid-term evaluation); and
5. The Link core indicator framework.

2.5 FIELDWORK

2.5.1 Introduction

The proposed approach made use of a combination of methods, reflecting the study aims, the range of stakeholder groups, and the resources available. A key challenge was to achieve sufficient breadth and depth within the available resources. The main groups addressed by each method are outlined in the table below (Table 2.1). The fieldwork schedule is indicated in Table 2.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Target Research Group/s</th>
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| 1. Face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews | National Level:  
- Link Malawi  
- Director (DIAS)  
- Inspectors Level & Project Coordinator (DIAS)  
District Level:  
- Link Mchinji  
- The District Education Manager  
- Primary Education Advisers |
| 2. Postal Self-Administered Survey | District Level:  
- Head Teachers; and  
- Parent representative (Chair of School Management Committee or Parent Teacher Association) |
| 3. Case Study | District Level:  
- Selected participating primary schools |
| 3a. Face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews | School Level:  
- Head Teachers; |
| 3b. Focus group/s | School Level (3 or more groups including representatives from the following): |
• Teachers;
• Learners;
• Parents:
  a. PTA members;
  b. Members of School Management Committee (SMC);
  c. Mother Group members; and
  d. Other Parents

### Table 2.2 Fieldwork Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>AM</th>
<th>PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HQ staff (DIAS)</td>
<td>Link Project Staff Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Consultations (Lilongwe)</td>
<td>District Education Manager Primary Education Advisors</td>
<td>Staff (consultation and survey briefing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Consultations (Mchinji)</td>
<td>Head Teacher School Management Committee</td>
<td>Teachers Learners Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Case 1 (Mchinji)</td>
<td>Head Teacher School Management Committee Teachers Learners Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Case 2 &amp; 3 (Mchinji)</td>
<td>Director &amp; HQ staff (DIAS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Case 3 (Lilongwe)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2.5.2 Stakeholder and Case Study Consultations

Consultations were held with stakeholder representatives in order to assess the evaluation questions and to provide the most up-to-date picture of issues affecting project performance. Consultations were also held with representatives of the case study schools.

The consultations were conducted by face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Topic guides to support the consultations were developed in advance of fieldwork and submitted to Link for review and comment (see Appendix C).

Consultations included Link project managers to interpret background documents and to provide the most up-to-date picture of issues affecting the project.

A list of those consulted is indicated in Appendix D, Appendix Table 2.

#### 2.5.3 Beneficiary Questionnaire Survey

We conducted a concise questionnaire survey aimed at measuring satisfaction with the project and gathering a range of quantitative and qualitative feedback from Head Teachers.

The sampling frame comprised a list of schools with the necessary information to contact the respondents. The data was supplied by Link.

The survey was conducted as an interviewer led questionnaire survey. A draft questionnaire was developed in advance and submitted to Link for review and comment (a copy of the survey is available in Appendix E). Link staff assisted in delivery of the survey.

The timing of the survey administration was agreed with Link, and Link staff supported administration of the survey in October 2018.
The survey, based on 130 Head Teacher responses, provides an overall margin of error of 5% at the 95% confidence level.

2.5.4 Case Study Research

A further phase of the research was undertaken with three case studies of school interventions (three primary schools).

Case studies were used to gain an in-depth understanding of selected cases, providing an understanding of why, for whom and under what circumstances the project achieves its objectives.

The case studies aimed to assist Link to:

- Illustrate the project benefits in a narrative form, drawing on carefully selected projects;
- Explore the various points of view of the different stakeholders;
- Examine differences in implementation in different circumstances; and
- Better understand the nature of the processes producing benefits.

The selection of cases was an important step for generalising and answering the evaluation questions. Cases were selected on the basis of discussion with Link and reflected consideration of the factors below:

- Access and availability within the fieldwork period;
- The availability of contrasting cases: that is, between very rural and more urban based schools; and
- A view by Link that the schools were typical cases.

Nonetheless, the cases are not statistically representative and should be taken as illustrative of a range of issues encountered by participating schools.

2.5.5 Focus Groups

Within the case studies, research with larger groups of parents, teachers and learners made use of a simple focus group approach. Focus groups bring individuals together to discuss issues in an open group format. The main benefits of the focus group approach are that it allows participants to direct discussions towards their main concerns and issues, and can collect very detailed and complex information, particularly information of a qualitative nature.

The focus groups included small groups of learners, parents and teachers brought together to engage in a guided discussion about a topic for 25-45mins. Groups were facilitated by Alastair McPherson using a topic guide, which was agreed with Link in advance. Translation for parent and learner groups was provided by a Primary Education Adviser, Teacher or Head Teacher. In future evaluations, resources permitting, it would be beneficial to use an independent third-party translator.

2.5.6 Ethical Issues

The research was undertaken in accord with the principle that participation is voluntary, there is informed consent for participation, and that no harm is caused to participants.

Research participants were made aware of why the research was happening, what would happen with the data and who it would be shared with. The following information was provided to participants:

- The purpose of the research and what it entails;
- Who is undertaking and financing the research including the identity of the researcher;
- An outline of any reasonably foreseeable risks, embarrassment or discomfort;
- A description of the likely impact of the study;
- A description of how the respondent was selected for the study;
- A statement that participation was voluntary, and that the respondent was free to withdraw at any time or to decline any particular question;
- Details as to how the findings will be disseminated:
• A description of what confidentiality or anonymity conditions apply; and
• An offer to answer any questions.

The study complied with Link’s contractual policies as follows:

• In order to fulfil the terms of the contract, will fully adhere to UK law on General Data Protection Regulation (2018); and
• Operate as a ‘data processor’ and Link International will operate as the ‘data controller’; and
• Collect, process, and store all data, including any personal or special category data provided by research participants in a secure location so that no unauthorised person is able to gain access to them; and
• Use this data only for the agreed purposes required for fulfilling the terms of the contract as per Annexes 1, 2, and 3, unless with prior written consent of Link International; and
• Not provide personal data to another contractor as a sub-processor unless with prior consent of Link International; and
• Ensure that data are kept confidential and are not disclosed to any person other than Link International and the Consultancy Manager; and
• Ensure that data are maintained appropriately to help the data controller fulfil their obligations to individual data subjects’ rights; and
• Inform the Consultancy Manager immediately in the event of a breach of personal data; and
• Carry out their own data protection impact assessments where needed; and
• Delete all personal and special category data collected after the contract is completed and after reviewing this with the Consultancy Manager; and
• Allow for and contribute to any audits or inspections as requested by the data controller.

2.6 ANALYSIS & TRIANGULATION

The analysis step included review of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during the fieldwork phase in order to answer the evaluation questions.

Information from a range of stakeholders and other sources is brought together (triangulated) to provide a range of perspectives on the evaluation questions.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 STRATEGIC FIT

This section examines the following evaluation questions:

1. To determine the performance of the INSPIRE project against project objectives, including
   c) The strategic fit and contribution to Government of Malawi and Scottish Government objectives and to the Sustainable Development Goals.

3.1.1 Introduction

This first section of the findings considers whether the fundamental strategic rationale for the project is appropriate and remains valid.

In summary, the main strategic drivers for the project include the:

• Sustainable Development Goals;
• Malawi Government Policy (MoEST & DIAS); and
3.1.2 Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are “a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection”\(^1\).

The project contributes to a number of these goals:

- **Goal Four**: By enabling schools in Dedza and Mchinji districts to deliver high quality, relevant education to all learners, the project supported Sustainable Development Goal Four: quality education. Specifically, it supported the Government of Malawi to make progress towards the following target: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

- **Goals Five and Ten**: Taking an inclusive approach, the project also contributed to the target: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. In doing so, the project supported Goal Five: Gender Equality, particularly the target which aims to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life, and Goal 10: reduced inequalities, particularly: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

- **Goal One**: Finally, as education has been proven to reduce poverty, the project contributed to Goal One: no poverty.

3.1.3 Malawi Government Policy

The project aimed to align with MoEST policy as expressed in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP 2008–2017), and the Education Sector Improvement Plan II.

The country's education system faces several challenges, including: inadequate school facilities; high dropout rates; high pupil-teacher ratios; low completion rates; and low learning achievement for children in poor rural areas (where HIV/AIDS prevalence is high).

The NESP outlines the country's strategy to achieve equitable access to education and improve the quality of learning, system governance and management. The NESP plan aims to:

1. Expand early childhood education;
2. Improve the quality and relevance of basic education;
3. Promote technical and vocational training responding to labour market needs; and
4. Support higher education and research.

Specifically, the project addresses Priority 2: Quality and Relevance, in the Malawi NESP (2008-17), which refers explicitly to the need to ‘reinforce inspection and supervision systems.’

Two implementation plans were developed by the Government of Malawi to achieve the policy targets of the NESP. The more recent Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP II) provides an updated roadmap for the objectives of the sector.

The ESIP II has identified several key policy areas for focus in the coming years. The emphasis is on the need for enhanced focus on improving quality in primary education and increased access to secondary education in Malawi.

The ESIP II acknowledges that the system is not delivering the services as required and expected and underlines the fact that despite improvements in access, the biggest challenge for the country is unacceptably low level of academic performances and learning (Global Partnership for Education, 2016).

The project is intended to contribute to this objective by developing “integrated planning, multi-stakeholder accountability and the provision of effective support to bring about improvements in the performance of Malawian schools”2.

Further, the project is designed to work within other partner programmes within the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) in Malawi to directly support the MoEST policies and enhance the effectiveness of the Primary School Improvement Plan (PSIP) and other national programmes.

The potential contribution of the project is high given the status of education in the country and the investment being directed towards education by the Government of Malawi (i.e. some 20 per cent of the Malawian national budget over the period 2010-15 was allocated to the education sector, with public expenditure on education averaging 7% of GDP (World Bank 2015 figures cited in Global Partnership for Education, 2016).

3.1.4 Scottish Government International Development Policy

The project has a strong fit with the Scottish Government International Development Policy3. In particular, the project aligns with the strategy’s themes of encouraging the historic relationship with Malawi. In addition, the project fits strongly with the theme of empowering partner countries through needs-led development work; capitalising on Scotland’s expertise; and working through a partnership approach that empowers communities.

The project also notes the following aspects of relevance to Scottish Government Policy (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1 Alignment with Scottish Government International Development Policy

- **Focus on where we can make a real difference and most impact in relation to the budget:** By improving the quality of education, our project has leveraged the existing investment in education to make a real difference to every school-going child in Dedza and Mchinji, including the most marginalised. Our project had a national impact, achieved cost-effectively through building the capacity of our Malawian partners to improve education services, rather than directly delivering a parallel service.

- **Harness existing Scottish and in-country expertise in key areas that could benefit global development:** This project was a partnership between Scottish and Malawian NGOs and education professionals at school, district and national Ministry levels. We drew on expertise from ex-HMIE Inspectors, database and mobile app designers, adapting cutting-edge Scottish educational and technological expertise to the Malawian context.

- **Harness and encourage the best of local expertise and skills in our partner countries:** This project was delivered by Malawian Ministry of Education staff with the support of key Link Malawi staff members providing capacity building and ongoing mentoring so that interventions can be sustained by the Government of Malawi.

- **Recognise that achieving success depends on collaborative working and collective action:** Director of Inspection and Advisory Services Mr Raphael Agabu said: “INSPIRE did not come from Link. It came from our relationship. We designed it together. With Link you are always working within MoEST. Your deliverables, vision and sustainability is within Ministry needs. Tools and instruments are developed within MoEST to meet MoEST needs.” (INSPIRE midline evaluation)


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3.1.5 Conclusion

There is a strong fit between the project and the strategic context. The strategic fit of the project is apparent in the key strategy documents and the rationale for the project remains valid, with the need for the project closely tied to core aspects of relevant international and national strategies, and also to that of the wider Link organisation.

3.1.6 Lessons & Recommendations

The project demonstrates that to maintain the relevance and responsiveness of any successor projects to the wider strategic developments in the education sector, it is necessary to ensure all relevant partners are engaged routinely so that duplication is avoided, and the support provided to the sector is relevant to need.

Similarly, the achievement of a high level of strategic fit, has been brought about in large part through the effective partnership working with stakeholders in Malawi. The characteristics underpinning this approach are outlined in greater detail in section 3.3. The recommendation would be to maintain these approaches.

3.2 Progress Towards Targets & Indicators

This section examines the following evaluation questions:

1. To determine the performance of the INSPIRE project against project objectives, including:
   a. Inputs, activities, outputs, outcome and impact; and
   b. The extent to which targets have been reached.

3.2.1 Introduction

This section assesses internal monitoring data to determine how the project has performed against relevant indicators and targets.

3.2.2 Budget

Project inputs are detailed in Table 3.1 and total £804,614 over the three-and-a-half-year period of the project. The project budget was fully utilised by project end.

Table 3.1 Summary of Project Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year One 2015-16</th>
<th>Year 2 2016-17</th>
<th>Year 3 2017-18</th>
<th>Year 4 2018-19 (6 months)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Budget</td>
<td>£140,000</td>
<td>£230,000</td>
<td>£319,754</td>
<td>£114,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Actual Spend</td>
<td>£118,957</td>
<td>£161,289</td>
<td>£286,202</td>
<td>£238,166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Project Documents

3.2.3 Indicators and Targets

A summary of progress against indicators and targets are noted in the tables below (see Table 3.2 to Table 3.9). Targets achieved are highlighted in green (fully achieved), orange (partially achieved) and red (not achieved or no evidence).

As at September 2018 some 20 of 24 project targets are fully achieved (83% of targets), three partially achieved, and one where data is not available at the evaluation point. A number of project achievements are highlighted in the box below (see Box 3.2).

Box 3.2 Highlighted Project Results

- Total direct beneficiaries: 116,848 (54% female). Total indirect beneficiaries: 362,152 (48% female);
• 71 government staff (27% female) trained in School Review, Schools Integrated Information System database and app, and integrated school, zone and district planning;

• 116,330 community members (55% female) participated in community meetings about school performance, Zone Conferences and the District Conference, with additional stakeholders reached through radio participation;

• 446 schools have an up-to-date School Report Card, and 100% of target schools have a School Improvement Plan which is effective, relevant and realistic according to government guidelines;

• Some 60% of primary and secondary schools increased performance in the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) Exam against a target of 20%;

• Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) Exam pass rate 76.9% (Boys 81.2%, Girls 72.8%) against a target of 70%;

As noted, several targets were not fully met, including impact indicators. For impact indicator one, the pass rate was better than expected, indicating that the improved quality of education resulting from the INSPIRE project may be contributing to improved learner outcomes. However, the repetition rate remains higher than the target, especially in Mchinji. This suggests that stronger learners are improving their performance, but the weaker learners are still being left behind. Further investigation is required to understand what extent school or home factors influence this, and what can be done to ensure all learners are improving.

For impact indicator two, the pass rate for girls has exceeded the target, but has not met the target for boys. The repetition rate for both boys and girls is also lower than the target. However, it is noted that the INSPIRE project interventions in secondary schools took place in the latter part of the project, and one key activity (School Review) was not delivered, although the training of district and school staff was carried out4.

For impact indicator three, it was not possible to measure this indicator as the information was not collected by the District Education Office, highlighting the desirability of developing alternative suitable indicators in future projects.

Outcome indicator one was also not achieved. The project indicates that they did not have a baseline for this indicator and therefore underestimated the starting point for all schools and the potential for progress. While showing improvement, very few schools were able to improve to the intended level in all six of the national Education Standards.

Section 3.4 reflects on stakeholder consultations, a beneficiary survey and case studies to comment further on project outcomes and impacts.

Table 3.2 Impact Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved learner outcomes in Mchinji District % of learners, disaggregated by gender (and other, e.g. Special Education Needs, Orphans, ultra-poor, if available) passing the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE); Number and % of learners (disaggregated) repeating Standard 1 and 5.</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>PSLCE pass rate 67.2%. Repetition Std 1 25% boys, 24% girls; Std 5 18% boys, 17% girls.</td>
<td>PSLCE pass rate 67.2%. Repetition Std 1 25% boys, 24% girls; Std 5 18% boys, 17% girls.</td>
<td>PSLCE pass rate 70%. Repetition at all Standards 20%.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PSLCE pass rate in Mchinji: Overall pass rate 73.4% Boys 76.9%, Girls 68.8%,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSPIRE PROJECT FULL TERM EVALUATION

Impact Indicator 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and % of learners (disaggregated) passing the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE); Number and % of learners (disaggregated) repeating Form 4 (Education Sector Improvement Plan p.59). NB the baseline figures are for Malawi as a whole; the project baseline will capture district level figures.</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>MSCE pass rates Boys 61%, Girls 46%; Repetition at Form 4 9.3%.</th>
<th>MSCE pass rates Boys 61%, Girls 46%; Repetition at Form 4 9.3%.</th>
<th>MSCE pass rates Boys 62%, Girls 47%; Repetition at Form 4 8%.</th>
<th>MSCE pass rates male 63%, female 48%; Repetition at Form 4 7.7%.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>MSCE pass rates Boys 60%, Girls 51%; Repetition at Form 4 Boys 4.7% Girls 4.6%</td>
<td>MSCE pass rate Boys = 43%, Girls = 35% Repetition 3%</td>
<td>MSCE pass rate Boys = 50.7% Boys =58.9% Repetition Boys =3.0% Girls 2.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact Indicator 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number and % of schools which show an improvement in the grades (below the pass grade) achieved by learners in core subjects in the PSCLE and MSCE</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Not available</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>10 (5%)</th>
<th>20 (10%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unavailable.</td>
<td>The district is not tracking this information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe

Table 3.3 Outcome Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>Outcome Indicator 1</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools in Mchinji deliver high quality relevant education to all learners.</td>
<td>Number and % of primary and secondary schools which `Meets minimum standards' in a core set of National Education Standards (NES): 1, 5, 10, 12, 16 and 22.</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>1 school (1.0 %)</td>
<td>1 school (0.5%)</td>
<td>However several schools have performed higher than level 2 on some NESs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe

Table 3.4 Output One Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 1</th>
<th>Output Indicator 1.1</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authority, engagement and guidance from MoEST departments (DIAS, Basic,</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding developed between four departments with agreed roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe
**Table 3.5 Output Two Indicators and Targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 2</th>
<th>Output Indicator 2.1</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>System for sharing accurate school performance data at community, school, zone, district, and central (MoEST) levels is operational</td>
<td>Number of people (Mchinji District staff) trained in use of tablets and SIIS app for School Review</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28 (14 PEAs, 13 ACCOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53 (14 PEAs Mchinji, 19 PEAs Dedza, 13 ACCOs, 1 Inspector, 6 DEMIS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people (MoEST, Mchinji District, Dedza District, Central West Division staff) trained to use Electronic School Report Card (ESRC) database and tools</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45 (35 PEAs, 6 District staff, 2 Inspectors, 2 DIAS staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 2</th>
<th>Output Indicator 2.3</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people (MoEST, Mchinji District, Dedza District, Central West Division staff) trained to use Malawi School Improvement and Support Toolkit (MSIST)</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55 (35 PEAs, 13 ACCOs 2 District staff, 3 Inspectors, and 2 DIAS staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 2</th>
<th>Output Indicator 2.4</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people (MoEST, Mchinji District, Dedza District, Central West Division staff) trained to use inclusive School Review toolkit</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22 (20 PEAs 1 DOPE &amp; 1 Auxiliary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.6 Output Three Indicators and Targets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRC produced for every school in Mchinji and Dedza</td>
<td>Number of schools which have an up to date SRC</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>397 (217 Mchinji, 180 Dedza)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>446 (Mchinji 199, 247 Dedza)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of and relevance of data sources used for the SRC in each school</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (Master timetable, School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (Master timetable, School)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5 Later renamed Schools Integrated Information Systems (SIIS)
### Table 3.7 Output Four Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of SIPs which are effective, relevant and realistic according to MoEST guidelines</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of SIPs which were produced with a) participation of community and b) include activities which will be carried out by the community</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of schools whose SIP priorities align with recommendations for school improvement from inspectors or advisors.</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.8 Output Five Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 5</th>
<th>Output Indicator 5.1</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Milestone 2 (Mar 2017)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and % of schools which achieve at least 3 (out of a maximum of 6) SIP targets for the year</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Unavailable.</td>
<td>100% No school was reported failing to implement their targets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and % of PEAs reporting that communities are contributing to ZIP monitoring</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 PEAs (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>6 PEAs (46%)</td>
<td>13 PEAs (100%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% of District Education Plan (DEP) targets for the year achieved by the District.</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Unavailable.</td>
<td>50% (5 out of 11 targets fully achieved, remaining targets partially achieved)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of participants (disaggregated) who attend SPAM, zone conference and district conference</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>5500 (50 per 110 schools) at SPAMs; 330 (3 per 110 schools) at zone conference; 78 (6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.9 Output Six Indicators and Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUT 6</th>
<th>Output Indicator 6.1</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Milestone 1 (Mar 2016)</th>
<th>Target (Sept 2018)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fully integrated (central-division-district-school) improvement plans developed, led by MoEST</td>
<td>Planned 0</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output Indicator 6.2</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output Indicator 6.3</td>
<td>Planned 0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unavailable.</td>
<td>20 (Advisory monthly report x 12; Quarterly output-based report at District Council level x 4; Quarterly Sexual &amp; Reproductive Health &amp; Nutrition report x 4.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Output Indicator 6.4</td>
<td>Planned N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe

3.2.4 Attribution

The project targets cited above refer to gross benefits. The project logframe has not included estimation of net benefits. Nonetheless, it is likely that there are moderate levels of attribution at the impact and outcome levels.

At the output level, there are likely to be high levels of attribution. Consultations with a senior DIAS official and a senior inspector (September 2018) indicated that there was little immediate prospect for the development of these outputs without the intervention of Link, working in partnership with stakeholders in Malawi.
Several PEAs consulted in Mchinji indicated that school improvements from NES ‘level one’ to ‘level two and above’ between the first and second school reviews were “in large part due to the INSPIRE project” (PEAS Mchinji, September 2018).

As noted in section 3.5, Figure 3.13, Head Teachers identified that other non-governmental projects contributed significantly in many cases to their ability to support school improvement in the previous two years.

3.2.5 Conclusion
The project has met the majority of logframe targets, within budget, and with progress against all but one of the others (where no data was available). However, at the impact level, high levels of learner repetition remain a problematic issue.

It is the view of this report that the attribution of the logframe impact indicators is moderate and that these high-level benefits to learners are unlikely to be fully attributable to Link due to the widespread influence of other interventions. Attribution for outputs are likely high and are unlikely to have been achieved without Link intervention.

3.2.6 Lessons & Recommendations
The majority of logframe indicators performed well, although a couple were less useful and highlight the importance of a good baseline to enable target setting; as well as the importance of checking the availability of evidence sources for indicators.

It is recommended that consideration is given to the inclusion of both gross and net indicators in future project monitoring. Estimation of net benefits takes into account ‘attribution’ and the benefits achieved over and above what may have occurred without the project intervention. Estimation of net benefits can be challenging and should be proportionate to the scale and significance of the project, and it is noted that subsequent larger scale Link projects are adopting methods that permit this type of analysis.

3.3 MANAGEMENT, CONTENT & DELIVERY

This section examines the following evaluation questions:

5. To determine the success of the management and delivery arrangements, highlighting any improvements that may be considered, including partnership arrangements.

3.3.1 Introduction
This section examines several aspects of project management and delivery, as well as the overall model for delivery adopted by the project.

3.3.2 Monitoring Arrangements
Monitoring arrangements for project indicators were in place and routinely reported. As noted in 3.2, one indicator was not effective as the source data was not available (Impact Indicator 3), highlighting the importance of verifying the data sources for indicators and, where feasible, tracking alternate measures. It is also noted that some indicators did not permit detailed breakdown by gender (where relevant) (Output Indicators 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 5.4).

3.3.3 Partnerships

3.3.3.1 DIAS / NATIONAL LEVEL
Link has an established presence in Malawi with a good reputation which has supported the development of relationships that support this project. This was evidenced in the 2016 SIAS Evaluation (see SIAS Evaluation 2016) and was further confirmed by a senior DIAS official, who commented that earlier work by Link on the
Dedza School Review and SIAS project had encouraged further collaboration with Link as a partner (the Dedza School Review and SIAS project played an important role in establishing the NES and school review processes). It is noted that the Link Malawi School Support Network (MSSN) (providing laptops and training in Dedza) was also identified as a project helping to establish Link’s reputation as well as helping to facilitate future work in the District (see SIAS Evaluation 2016).

A senior DIAS official commented that “We have very good working relations...we plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate together” (senior DIAS official September 2018), and that this operated at the centre and in districts. They also commented that “Link observes and adheres to Malawi laws, policies and strategies”. The official pointedly contrasted the approach of Link to other Scottish NGOs, with Link being the only Scottish NGO that undertakes a truly joint approach. The official praised Link Malawi and Link International personnel for their professionalism and commitment.

Evidence from the 2016 SIAS evaluation found that flexibility of approach is viewed as a strength internally and is acknowledged as a factor that helped to move the SIAS project forward (senior Dedza District official #2, March 2016).

This flexible approach was maintained in relation to the INSPIRE project. As noted by Link Malawi project staff, Link worked closely with DIAS officials in all aspects of school assessment.

As noted in section 3.1, a strong strategic fit has been achieved through a very good relationship with Link characterised by a well-developed partnership approach and regular consultation so that DIAS and Link work closely in shaping the nature of the INSPIRE project (senior DIAS official, September 2018).

In relation to the previous SIAS project, a senior DIAS official also commented that the responsive relationship with Link had encouraged “ownership and endorsement” of the approach by DIAS. This view was very strongly reiterated by the same senior DIAS official in relation to the approach during the INSPIRE project: “the project is our project; we own it and we want to use the results”... and that ...”DIAS own, implements and sustains” the project (Senior DIAS official, September 2018).

One area for potential review is the operation of the project steering committee. It was found (through consultation with project staff) that the committee (which comprised all Directors in the MoEST) was not always as speedy in decision making as desired, mainly due to the fact that they met rather infrequently. For a relatively technical project of this nature a more streamlined form of oversight may be more appropriate.

3.3.3.2 DISTRICT LEVEL

During the SIAS project, a senior Dedza District official commented that Link staff worked closely with the District, and that Link staff were “hard working, friendly and shared information” (senior Dedza District official, March 2016). This approach was reiterated for the work with Link during the INSPIRE project: in both Dedza and Mchinji Districts.

The Mchinji DEM commented that Link was a “very important partner”, that they “plan together”, that they had helped implement the NES in the district, and that Link officers were “very hard working”, “very available” and “reached very easily” (Mchinji official, September 2018).

More generally, the existing presence of Link in Dedza promoted positive project outcomes based on existing knowledge of the local community and structures (see SIAS Evaluation 2016). This work also formed an important foundation for the success of the INSPIRE project in Dedza. While Link has less history in Mchinji, it was also found that relationships with local education officials and schools were very good.

District meetings were found to be a prominent feature of the INSPIRE project, that received praise from stakeholders at various levels, and formed an important role in disseminating information on the project, gaining buy in from stakeholders, and raising the profile and prestige of the project and Link more generally.

A senior DIAS official commented that they had attended both District and school community meetings and found them “very, very inspiring” (DIAS official September 2018), and that local people’s perceptions were
sometimes at odds with those of officials and that attendance helped as a policy maker. Also, that Link had helped to tap the knowledge, and skills of communities.

3.3.4 Lessons for School Review Process

Scope of School Review

In consultation with DIAS officials, the School Review focused on a limited number of six out of the 26 NES standards; two from each of the main categories of standard (Standards 1, 5, 10, 12, 16, 22). This was considered to be a sufficient workload for schools to focus on. Feedback from schools (see section 3.5), suggest that this limited number was itself challenging for many, and that the scope of the reviews was set at a realistic level. The plan for rotating or adding to the scope of the review was not apparent and would be an area to be defined in any successor activities.

The School Review process is a relatively intensive exercise: each School Review involves three PEAS with one school being reviewed per day and all schools within a zone being reviewed e.g. 13 schools. Importantly though, the School Review was considered to be a practical supplement to level 1 school inspections, which are conducted relatively infrequently, and an activity that can provide much more frequent feedback to school communities, to enable improvement (PEAS Mchinji, September 2018).

A Link team member noted that this is something which might evolve in future, depending on how PEAs collaborate. It is possible (though fairly challenging) to do School Review with one or two PEAs. According to the DIAS handbook School Review should be done in every school every three years. So, within each zone only four to five schools would need to be assessed each year. The downside identified is that this doesn't give a full picture of a zone at a particular point in time.

Schools Inspection Information System (SIIS) Database

As part of the INSPIRE project Link provided DIAS with a database (Schools Inspection Information System (SIIS)) to store data from the School Review process (and make it available for analysis within DIAS), as well as a number of trainings in the system (at District and National level).

A Link team member noted that there is a process for transferring the data from the tablets in the field (schools) to a district database and then from districts to a national database. This is done using memory cards because of the lack of reliability of the internet. The staged process also means that the districts have the same information as central level and the two do not get out of sync, which could happen if the tablets sent data directly to the national level. It is noted that the system is not designed to provide a two-way flow of information; it only works in one direction. However, the Link team member commented that access to the data at every level will facilitate the downward flow of information, guidance, etc. through other channels.

An interview with a senior DIAS official (September 2018) indicated the view that the system was at pilot stage, and that the database remained to be made ‘live’. i.e. the database is not yet connected with tablets in the field. However, this is the perceived intention. Such an arrangement would provide a two-way flow of information between DIAS, Divisional Office and Districts. However, this step was considered demanding in terms of technical and financial resources. The discrepancy in views is an area for Link to check and resolve as necessary.

Effective database handover was viewed as a potential challenge. While training to DIAS has been provided, ongoing capacity for database management and maintenance will be required (Link International officer, September 2018). Capacity will also be required at the District level for maintenance of databases.

However, it is noted that significant capacity building has already been provided. A Link team member commented that at district level 35 PEAs (all in Dedza and Mchinji) and six additional District staff (the staff who manage the government’s Education Management Information System, EMIS, database) have been trained in how to input data to tablets and to the district database, upload data from the tablets to the district database, and produce school report cards from the database.
In addition, at national level, four members of the core DIAS team have received training on how to upload the district data into the national database.

It is noted that at the end of the project some reporting functions of the national database were not finalised, so training on the full range of reporting outputs from the national database is still to be done. In addition, Link staff continue to work in these districts in partnership with the District Education Offices, so are available to provide guidance and technical support if required (as commented by a Link team member).

School Management Simulation Game & Training

School management training was provided by use of a game which simulates management decision making. It was indicated by a Link officer that all 94 schools received training in the first cohort of schools, and 52 of 104 received training in the second cohort (Sept-Nov 2017). Typically, the training lasted 2-3 hours. Schools do not keep a copy of the game, but some schools have been offered a repeat of the training.

A senior DIAS official commented that the tool was a useful and effective resource, when prompted but did not volunteer the game as a key part of the project (senior DIAS official September 2018). As discussed in the case studies, a number of stakeholders recalled participation in the training (for example, one Head teacher participated in the training in February 2018 at a teacher Development Centre along with a number of other Head Teachers). Although direct participation in the training was not the case for everyone consulted, most had found the training useful in understanding their roles but would welcome further practice. A number of teachers at a primary school in Mchinji (Case study school 2) suggested leaving a copy in the school, so that stakeholders could practice together.

However, it is noted (reflecting Link team member comments), that this is very difficult to do because the game’s effectiveness relies heavily on the skill of the facilitator. Suitable facilitators may not be available in every school and would require extensive training, not to mention the cost of the boards. Nonetheless, there may be scope consider a follow-up pack to reinforce the skills learned during the facilitates sessions.

Community Radio

It is noted that Community Radio has played an effective role in awareness raising on the NES (senior Link Malawi official, September 2018). Information on NES including roles and responsibilities of stakeholders has been broadcast frequently on local (commencing May 2018) and national radio (commencing August 2018) (with phone-ins and discussion). A number of PEAs (PEAS Mchinji September 2018) identified the radio programmes as effective in disseminating a general awareness of the NES.

Cohorts

The delivery of the project in cohorts has permitted refinement of several aspects of the process to be made at each round. The first round of School Review took place in May-Sept 2016 in 94 schools in 6 zones. At this point, a number of lessons were learned with revision of project tools. A further revision to project delivery emphasised a greater focus of the school reviewers on observation and recording practice in the first instance, rather than including an immediate requirement to categorise activities; this was considered to get in the way of open-minded observation (Link Malawi Project Officers September 2018).

A number of PEAs acknowledge the limitations in only being able to carry out a follow up School Review in a limited number of schools: permitting greater embedding of the process and tracking of progress. They acknowledged the limitation in available resources, and the need for further support to be able to do this (PEAs Mchinji 2018).

Tablets

The first round of School Review in 2016 was undertaken without tablets and all done ‘hard copy’. Tablets to support the School Review process were issued towards the end of 2016/early 2017 (Link Malawi Project Officers September 2018). The is followed a period of software development in 2016, using an external consultant supported by Link. Every participating PEA was issued with a tablet and trained in its use for
collecting data (Mchinji PEAS, September 2018). The PEAs view was the tablets are working well in the field, avoiding the need for paperwork, and making sharing of data easier (PEAs, Mchinji, September 2018).

**School Report Card**

A main output for dissemination of the School Review findings is the School Report Card (a one-page laminated sheet providing a summary of review findings using graphics). Views on the usefulness of the card were generally favourable (DEM Mchinji, 2018), in that they are easy to interpret, and communicate the main findings. However, there is a balance to be struck between an accessible report to a wide audience and the level of detail. A senior DIAS official noted that, while good for communities, the information contained was perhaps too brief and general, and there was scope to add more detail and specifics to permit meaningful improvement (senior DIAS official, September 2018).

However, a Link team member commented that the system is designed to produce different reports for different audiences. At district level the system is already able to output the full information from a specific School Review or inspection, including which specific requirements of the Standards were/ were not met, strengths, area for improvement, recommendations from the assessor, and agreed actions for the school. It is possible to select any or all of these to report.

It is noted that at national level the full reporting functions were not finalised by the end of the project, but Link are continuing to develop functions that will enable comparison of performance between zones and districts on different Standards.

### 3.3.5 Secondary Schools

A limitation of the project is the degree to which secondary schools have been engaged. At the project end point, focus had been on primary schools. As noted in the end of project report “the INSPIRE project interventions in secondary schools took place in the latter part of the project, and one key activity (School Review) was not delivered, although the training of district and school staff was carried out. The impact of the project on these figures is therefore limited” (Link 2018 End of Project Narrative, p7). The difficulties in engaging with secondary schools largely stem from problems in engaging with appropriate officials responsible for secondary schools, who are based at a divisional and not district level.

A senior DIAS official acknowledged this problem and that the separate location of officials for primary and secondary schools created a barrier and that working relations between DIAS officials and secondary schools were still being worked out (Senior DIAS official, September 2018). However, it was noted that eventually they should be brought on board, and that they could utilise very similar processes to those developed for primary schools.

This is a long-standing issue that was identified in the precursor SIAS project and has not yet been satisfactorily resolved (this is primarily an issue for MoEST and not Link). The findings also re-enforce those for the SIAS project, regarding roles and responsibilities for secondary school performance support. It is recommended that Link encourage successor bodies (MoEST and DIAS) to continue to examine this issue so that the clearly defined roles and responsibilities now in informing primary school development are also available for the secondary school sector.

A Link team member commented that the INSPIRE project had achieved progress in this area, although it is much slower than they would have liked. A major limitation was perceived as the lack of capacity within government to support secondary school improvement where there is no equivalent to PEAs. Therefore, there is no clear body for conducting School Reviews or helping schools to identify priorities and work towards achieving them.

It was noted that under the SIAS project inspectors were trained on both primary and secondary inspection, and the SIIS database can hold data on secondary schools, so it is possible for government to use this for storing and analysing secondary school Inspection data and producing reports. During INSPIRE Link Malawi convened a number of meetings of those responsible for secondary schools, and towards the end of the
project MoEST proposed the way forward would be as follows: “Cluster based teams of subject specialists can be trained to play the advisory role for their area according to their specialization. After the SEMAs and PEMAs (inspectors) have carried out an assessment these teams would pick up the work and complete the gap in between assessments until all identified issues are dealt with”. However, a Link team member noted that it is not within Link’s capacity during INSPIRE to pilot this, but it is hoped that MoEST will resource the proposal sufficiently to make it a success.

It is likely that if the process developed under INSPIRE and related projects are to be rolled out to secondary schools, there will need to be continuing efforts to engage with relevant officials at the divisional level.

3.3.6 Sustainability & Succession

Responsibility for taking forward the INSPIRE project outputs rests with DIAS following completion of the project at the end of September 2018.

A senior DIAS official confirmed that it was the intention of the department to roll-out the approach nationally subject to resources being available (Senior DIAS official, September 2018).

However, the latter point is a big caveat, and without resourcing there is a high risk that the process falls into abeyance. It was commented that national roll-out of the model would include significant challenges. Nonetheless, there is a high degree of ownership and commitment on the part of DIAS (as noted in section 3.3.3.1 on page 16) and DIAS have a strong track record in moving forward on the adoption and roll out of the process developed during the SIAS project.

This was a view reflected by a range of stakeholders reflecting resource constraints for officials at national and district levels, but also the capacity of schools and teachers to respond effectively.

The presence of a series of confounding factors across the education sector was a common theme in consultations as discussed in section 3.5.4.

It is noted that it was the intention of Link that the work of the INSPIRE project would be further promoted by a follow-up project to encourage wider roll out and embedding of the approach. However, a funding application to the Scottish Government for a successor project in 2018 was unsuccessful. This is likely to be a serious impediment to national roll-out of the approach, and the decision somewhat undermines the many years of effective development and partnership working to this point.

Nonetheless, discussion with Link officials (Link official, September 2018) indicated that alternative mechanisms would be explored to facilitate widening access to the INSPIRE approach where the opportunity arises. A Link team member commented that, for example, a DFID funded project focused on out-of-school adolescent girls which began in 2018, includes supporting government to expand the approach to Lilongwe, where Link has not previously worked.

3.3.7 Conclusion

The management, content and delivery of the project has been effective, reflecting a flexible and responsive approach with stakeholders. The findings suggest that significant progress has been made in the implementation of School Reviews and associated activities at District level in Mchinji and to a lesser extent Dedza, and at the national level in the close working relationships and capacity building with DIAS.

Of particular significance, is the approach to partnership working at national and district levels, which has helped to match the project to the needs of stakeholders. Limitations of the project at secondary school / divisional level are noted.

The development of the approach within primary schools at District level is progressing and the project has played a leading role in influencing the development of the school improvement process, further roll-out of which now falls to DIAS.
The sustainability of the approach developed is subject to the ownership and continued commitment and roll out by Malawi authorities. This report identifies a high degree of ownership and commitment by MoEST and DIAS to sustain the work of the INSPIRE project through national rollout. However, the widespread establishment of the approach across Malawi is a work in progress and will require significant ongoing resource.

3.3.8 Lessons & Recommendations

A number of lessons identified from the assessment of management, content and delivery include:

- The value of making use of existing networks and relationships to secure support for project development and delivery;
- The importance of meaningful partnership working in fostering strategic, targeted, effective and sustainable solutions;
- Challenges of national level steering committees, especially for more technically oriented projects; and
- There remains a need for development of the approach at secondary school level (although this may be for other stakeholders to explore at this stage).

The need for further investment in training and resources to ensure successful and sustained national rollout of the INSPIRE model is reiterated. It is recommended that Link continue dialogue with appropriate NGOs and other donor partners to continue to support the Government of Malawi in this policy area, in order to ensure the gains from the SIAS and INSPIRE projects, and the momentum behind the process, is not lost.

3.4 Case Studies

This section is mainly relevant to a number of evaluation questions, including

2. To determine any wider impacts of the INSPIRE project in relation to the overall project aim; and
5. To determine the success of the management and delivery arrangements, highlighting any improvements that may be considered, including partnership arrangements.

3.4.1 Introduction

Several case studies are presented, identifying, where appropriate, lessons for future project delivery. All three schools are located within Mchinji District.

3.4.2 Case Study One

3.4.2.1 Introduction

This Mchinji District school has received two performance reviews (October 2016 and May 2018). As for many other schools in both Dedza and Mchinji, the school was experiencing a rapid increase in enrolment.

At the time of the 2016 School Review, the school reported 1,233 learners, and 14 teachers (a ratio of 88 pupils to 1 teacher). By the time of the second School Review, the school reported an increased enrolment of 1,360 and a corresponding increase in teachers to 19 (72 learners to 1 teacher).

At the time of the case study visit, in September 2018, the Head Teacher reported an enrolment of 1,457 (770 boys and 687 girls), with 21 teachers (69 learners to 1 teacher).

3.4.2.2 Findings of the School Reviews

In the first School Review, the school did not meet minimum standards in four of the six standards; meeting the minimum standard in both ‘School self-evaluation and improvement’, and ‘Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life’ (see Table 3.10). The review team noted positive features under ‘management’, including the ‘availability of schemes of work, lesson plans and registers’, and that the ‘SIP/SIG is
implemented’. The team also noted a positive feature under ‘Outcomes for students’, including ‘Learners are interested to learn’.

Recommendations were made for ‘management’ that:

- ‘SIP/SIG should be intensified’; and that
- ‘Learners and teachers to be sensitised on what to do in the event of disasters.

Recommendations for the ‘teaching process’ included:

- ‘Assessment records should be updated’;
- ‘Teachers should use teaching and learning resources’;
- ‘Corrections should be done for learners to improve performance’; and
- ‘Resources should be used adequately’.

No good practices were recorded in the school. For clarification, it is noted that Link’s training of PEAs is that ‘good practice’ notes should be used to highlight practice that is above average or exceptional which other schools could emulate. This should not be interpreted as the school lacking any good practices (as commented by Link team member).

Following the second review, the school recorded improved performance: meeting minimum standards in all but one of the six standards (‘accurate and constructive use of assessment’ being the exception).

The review team noted a positive feature under ‘leadership’, including the ‘Community involvement in SIP production and implementation’. ‘Learners good behaviour’ was noted under the heading ‘Outcomes for Students’. Finally, under ‘The Teaching Process’, the review team noted the ‘logical presentation of lessons’.

Recommendations were made for ‘management’ that included:

- ‘Construct additional latrines and change rooms for girls’.

Recommendations for the ‘teaching process’ included:

- ‘Teachers to open accurate assessment records and assess learners regularly; and
- ‘Adopt teaching activities to suit learners with different learning challenges/needs’.

Again, no good practices were recorded in the school.

A number of general observations on the review reports are as follows:

- The review recommendations are very general and would be strengthened by including more specific actions, roles and responsibilities for implementation, and recommended timescales for action (to be addressed by the School Improvement Plan);
- Not all of the standards included in School Review have recommendations against them (even those where minimum standards are not being met): the reviews would benefit by explicitly providing recommended actions against each of the standards included in the review; and
- The second review does not specifically comment on progress against the recommendations of the previous review: this would aid understanding of progress within the school and help identify problems in achieving performance improvements.
Table 3.10 School Review Scores, Case One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES</th>
<th>First School Review</th>
<th>Second School Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes for Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Care and welfare of students</td>
<td>1. Does not meet minimum standards</td>
<td>2. Meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Reviews

3.4.2.3 HEAD TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Head Teacher are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The Head Teacher expressed a view that the School Report Card was very useful in supporting school improvement and that it was widely and easily understood by the school community.
  - The Head Teacher indicated that he had received training on the NES at the local Teacher Development Centre (TDC) (in 2017), that the school possessed a single copy of the NES, and that the Head Teacher had subsequently held at least one training on the NES with teachers.
  - The Head Teacher indicated that training had been provided at the TDC using the School Management Simulation Game (February 2018) (along with other Head Teachers): the training was found to be useful and had improved knowledge on how to manage the school.

- **School Improvements**
  - The school had witnessed “very good improvements in results”, “improvement in relations with parents”, and improved attendance by learners, with lower dropout rates. The School Review process had also facilitated development of the School Improvement Plan, which in turn provided a basis to secure a School Improvement Grant from the government.
  - The NES framework is considered “useful and helpful”, particularly in engaging teachers, improving punctuality (teachers and pupils), improving class management, and improving preparation of lessons.
  - Improvement in school results was also perceived to have led to greater interest in school business on the part of parents.

- **Community Engagement**
The Head Teacher cited longstanding problems in engaging the community and that the “community did not take care of the school”: engagement was a work in progress. However, the Head Teacher confirmed the engagement of the community in the School Review process; outlining a meeting with the wider community lasting two hours following the review (a week later), and that the community was “very happy” with the process. The wider community had also been informed, in a general way, about the NES.

**Attribution**
- The Head Teacher asserted that the INSPIRE project had been very influential in supporting improvements in the school.
- However, it was noted that the school had also received support from Mary’s Meals for the previous seven years, which had encouraged learners to come to school (the project provided resources for serving porridge to learners between 6-7.30am in the morning).

**Demonstration**
- The school had hosted a visiting delegation from Uganda in 2018, who came to learn about the NES, School Review and INSPIRE project. The Head Teacher noted they were still waiting for a copy of a report from this visit.

### 3.4.2.4 Teacher Perspectives

Key points from consultation with the Teachers are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - Teachers indicated that four of the current teaching staff attended NES training at the TDC. These teachers subsequently shared their knowledge with other teaching staff.
  - The teachers expressed the view that they had a good knowledge of the NES, but that it would be helpful to have more training. It was noted that no more training was planned.
  - A number of teachers also participated in the School Management Simulation Game (again, information from the session was shared with other teachers).
  - The teachers also found the School Review findings a fair reflection of the school performance.

- **School Improvements**
  - Teachers indicated that learners were more involved and that revised teaching practices were making it easier for learners to benefit from lessons.
  - Learners were also more focused in class, reading performance had improved, attendance was much improved, and dropout rates had fallen.

- **Community Engagement**
  - Teachers participated in a community meeting with wider stakeholders (i.e. parents, learners, chiefs etc.), discussing the findings of the School Review. The meeting was considered helpful, with the community accepting the results and open to making improvements to the school.

- **Attribution**
  - The teachers were broadly of the view that school improvements were attributable to the INSPIRE project. However, the teachers also noted the importance of other programmes in encouraging attendance.

- **Barriers**
  - Teachers stated that further training on the NES was required.
  - The teachers noted that they don’t have their own copy of the NES, and that this limits their knowledge of the framework.

### 3.4.2.5 Parent Perspectives

Key points from consultation with the parents are as follows (a group with representatives from the SMC, PTA and Mother Group was consulted):

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
All of the groups present indicated their involvement in the School Review. In particular, the group highlighted their awareness of the School Report Card and satisfaction with improved performance in the school.

The group had a general awareness of the NES and had learned about “the most important things” in the NES. However, they would like more information on the NES and would welcome further training, commenting “only the teachers are trained”.

- **School Improvements**
  - The group had witnessed several changes in school in the previous couple of years. This included an improved pass rate amongst learners, improved behaviour of learners, better cooperation between teachers and learners, the re-integration of young mothers to the school, construction of new classrooms, and improved relations between parents and teachers.

- **Community Engagement**
  - As noted above, the group witnessed improved relations between the teachers and parents but commented that parental involvement in the school was already established.
  - However, they also acknowledged there was work to be done to encourage the wider parent community to send their children to school.

- **Attribution**
  - While the parents were seeing some positive changes in the school, they did not particularly attribute this to the INSPIRE project.

- **Barriers**
  - Akin to other stakeholders, the parent group noted the significant barriers facing the school in terms of lack of resources (and cited a requirement for more teachers, more teaching blocks, latrines, and teachers' houses).

### 3.4.2.6 Learner Perspectives

Key points from consultation with the Learners are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The learners did not have a good knowledge of the NES and School Review process but commented on the routine involvement of learners in school meetings and being consulted on the School Improvement Plan once per year.

- **School Improvements**
  - The learners cited several changes in the school in the previous two years. They commented on improved pass rates, better relations with teachers, and more effective teaching. They also commented on the recruitment of newly qualified teachers.

- **Community Engagement**
  - The group acknowledged scope to further encourage attendance at school, with all aware of peers in their communities who did not attend.

- **Attribution**
  - While the learners were seeing some positive changes in the school, they did not particularly attribute this to the INSPIRE project.

- **Barriers**
  - In relation to attendance, the group cited general poverty as a main reason, with the need for greater learner support.

### 3.4.2.7 Conclusion

The School Review process had been operational for two years in the case examined, with a number of development needs identified against the NES. The school staff appeared committed to, and supportive of, the NES framework, and the review process.
Significant progress against NES standards was seen over the period and all the groups consulted within the school (Head Teachers, Teachers, Parents, and Learners) pointed to a range of recent and significant improvements in the school infrastructure, overall learner performance, and community engagement, with Head Teachers and teachers attributing this in large part to the INSPIRE project.

It is noted that all groups also commented on a general lack of resources within the school as a major limit on achievement.

3.4.3 Case Study Two

3.4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The second case study school had received one School Review at the time of the consultation. The review was conducted in November 2017.

As of the November 2017 School Review, the school had a total enrolment of 1,104 learners and 17 teachers: a ratio of 65 pupils to 1 teacher. At the time of the case study visit, early in the school year, the school reported an enrolment of 1,111 (but this was likely to increase as new students enrolled). There were 560 girls and 551 boys. The number of qualified teachers was 19 (recently reduced from 20).

It was noted that the school benefited from being in very close proximity to the Teacher Development Centre and the PEA office.

3.4.3.2 FINDINGS OF THE SCHOOL REVIEW

In the school’s first and only School Review, the school performed relatively well and did not meet minimum standards in just two of the six standards: ‘Accurate and constructive use of assessment’, and ‘Care and welfare of students’ (see Table 3.11).

The review team noted positive features under ‘Leadership’, including the ‘Learners and community participating in the School Improvement Plan planning’. The team also noted a positive feature under ‘Outcomes for students’, including ‘Learners working independently to solve problems during lessons’, and ‘Learners asking for clarification of a concept’. Under ‘The teaching process’ the review team note that ‘Teachers logically presented concepts during the teaching and learning process’.

Recommendations were made for ‘Leadership’ that included:

- ‘Making sure that a change room for adolescent girls is functioning’; and
- ‘Constructing (closing) open toilet pit’.

Recommendations for the ‘teaching process’ included:

- ‘Assessing learners regularly and updating records for all subjects’.

No good practices were recorded in the school. The same general observations on the review reports as noted as for case one (regarding provision of very general recommendations and lack of recommendations against all in scope NES).
Table 3.11 School Review Scores, Case Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES</th>
<th>First School Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes for Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning in lessons</td>
<td>2. Meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life</td>
<td>2. Meets minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Teaching Process</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Accurate and constructive use of assessment</td>
<td>1. Does not meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Care and welfare of students</td>
<td>1. Does not meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: School Reviews*

3.4.3.3 Head Teacher Perspectives

Key points from consultation with the Head Teacher are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The Head Teacher commented that the project was “very, very useful” and had contributed to the improvement of the school, helping to identify what was needed to improve, assisting in definition of clearer goals, and acting as an “eye opener”.
  - The Head Teacher had attended training on the NES at the TDC, along with local leaders and school stakeholders (i.e. representatives from SMC, PTA, Mother Group).
  - The Head Teacher had subsequently conducted training for teachers on the NES (with the assistance of the PEA).

- **School Improvements**
  - One of the main challenges indicated by the Head Teacher was the lack of toilet facilities in the school. This was identified in the School Review. The Head Teacher indicated that this had now been rectified and that the toilets had been built with the support of the wider community.
  - The Head Teacher also asserted that there had been significant improvement in the performance of learners.
  - In addition, the Head Teacher commented that the techniques employed by teachers had improved and that teacher preparation was better and that teachers were “trying harder” compared to the past.
  - Learners had also benefited from a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities in school improvement.

- **Community Engagement**
  - The Head Teacher indicated that there had been challenges in achieving the full participation of the wider community in school improvement; and that the wider community had not fully understood their responsibilities regarding involvement in the school. However, as a result of the project, this had now improved, and participation was “good”.

*Source: School Reviews*
o The Head Teacher acknowledged that community meetings had been held as part of the School Review process and that these had been useful in engaging the wider community.

- **Attribution**
  o The Head Teacher attributed improvements in the school to Link and the INSPIRE project.
  o However, they also noted the presence of other projects such as the Kabira Community Development (https://kacode.org/), which assisted in lesson development.

- **Barriers**
  o The Head Teacher highlighted the need for lower teacher: pupil ratios for more effective teaching. In addition, the School Improvement Grant was inadequate to meet the scale of enrolment and the resource needs of the teachers.
  o The Head Teacher also cited the need for more regular visits by the PEA so that the school could “keep improving”.
  o There was a need for more extensive training on the NES (i.e. the duration of training, at “one or two days”, was perceived as too limited).

### 3.4.3.4 TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Teachers are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  o Teachers indicated that they had received training on the NES within the school as part of Continuing Professional Development, and that this training was helpful in developing their understanding of the framework. They indicated that “they had learned a lot on methods and encouraging learners”.
  o Teachers noted that the School Report Card was “very helpful”.
  o A number of teachers had participated in the School Management Simulation Game.
  o The teachers noted that it was important there is follow up to ensure actions are implemented in schools.

- **School Improvements**
  o Teachers indicated that their use of assessment had been developed and that they had not carried out any assessment in the past.
  o The group also highlighted that they were making better use of teaching resources / learning materials more effectively and routinely.
  o Changes were perceived in learner performance, with better progression, which was “very satisfying”.
  o The teachers also noted that more learners were progressing to secondary school than in the past. In addition, attendance had improved.
  o Progress had also been made on working more effectively with learners with disabilities as a result of the Link work.
  o The teachers noted that learners were more assertive in asking about the school environment and becoming more involved in the running of the school.

- **Community Engagement**
  o Teachers noted that relationships with parents and the wider community had improved, and that there was a greater sense of the community being “all together”.
  o Teachers noted that they had a potential role as champions of the School Review/NES approach, as they often lived within the community, and that more could be made of their position outside of school.

- **Attribution**
  o The teachers were broadly of the view that school improvements were attributable to the INSPIRE project. However, the teachers also noted the importance of other programmes in encouraging improvements.

- **Barriers**
Teachers noted the general lack of resources available to the school as a significant barrier.

Further training on the NES was seen as important, as well as further use of the School Management Simulation Game: ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to participate.

3.4.3.5  PARENT PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Parents are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The group acknowledged that they had participated in the School Review feedback meeting, and that they had found the review helpful. Some members of the group (SMC) had also participated in some training on the NES/School Review. Further training was desired, and they commented that the amount received was “not really enough”.
  - Members of the group had also participated in the School Management Simulation Game and found the exercise helpful in identifying areas where they could improve the performance of the school.
  - The group commented that they were “now aware how to go about improvement for the school”, but there was a need for the process to be ongoing.
  - The School Report Card was found the be “very helpful”, and a good way to convey information about the school performance.

- **School Improvements**
  - The group cited “a great improvement” compared to the previous year. This encompassed better pass rates for learners, better communications between school and parents, improved motivation of learners, improved toilets and provision of a girls’ changing room facility (the latter had greatly encouraged girl learner attendance).

- **Community Engagement**
  - The group cited significantly improved relations between the school and the community, and that parents and the wider community felt “more involved”. The group acknowledged that more work was required to engage the wider community.

- **Attribution**
  - The parents highlighted the importance of a feeding programme within the school as an additional factor that was encouraging attendance.

- **Barriers**
  - In particular, the group cited inadequate teaching and learning resources, lack of a kitchen for preparing porridge (open air), lack of toilets, and also too few classrooms (need 16 but only have 12). In addition, there were only two permanent houses (and four temporary buildings) for 19 teachers. This situation, common to all of the schools visited, means that teachers have significant journeys to school: contributing to attendance issues, and limiting availability for teaching duties.

3.4.3.6  LEARNER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Learners are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - Learners had low awareness of the NES/School Review process but did confirm routine consultation of learners as part of the School Improvement Plan development.

- **School Improvements**
  - Learners cited improvements to toilets (increased provision) and the provision of a girls changing room. In addition, they cited provision of more desks for learners.

- **Community Engagement**
  - As for case one, the group acknowledged scope to further encourage attendance at school, with all aware of peers in their communities who did not attend.
• Attribution
  o While the learners were seeing some positive changes in the school, they did not particularly attribute this to the INSPIRE project.

• Barriers
  o In relation to attendance, the group cited general poverty, lack of care by parents, teenage marriage and lack of interest in education as main reasons.

3.4.3.7 CONCLUSION

The School Review process had been operational for one year in the case examined, with a number of development needs identified against the NES, and with one review undertaken. Nonetheless, the school staff appeared committed to, and supportive of, the NES framework, and the review process, and the process appeared well-embedded.

While it was too early to chart progress against the NES, all the groups consulted within the school (Head Teachers, Teachers, Parents, and Learners) pointed to a range of recent and significant improvements in the school infrastructure, overall learner performance, and community engagement, with Head Teachers and teachers attributing this in large part to the INSPIRE project.

It is noted that all groups also commented on a general lack of resources within the school as a major limit on achievement.

3.4.4 Case Study Three

3.4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The third Mchinji District school had also received two performance reviews (June 2016 and May 2018). As for case one, the school was experiencing a rapid increase in enrolment.

At the time of the 2016 School Review, the school reported 1,190 learners, and 14 teachers (a ratio of 85 pupils to 1 teacher). By the time of the second School Review, the school reported an increased enrolment of 1,311 and a decrease in teachers to 13 (101 learners to 1 teacher).

At the time of the case study visit, in September 2018, the Head Teacher reported an enrolment of 1,260 (605 boys and 655 girls) (expected to rise as still at early point in school year). However, the number of school teachers had improved somewhat at 16 (13 male and 3 female).

3.4.4.2 FINDINGS OF THE SCHOOL REVIEW

In the first School Review, the school did not meet minimum standards in four of the six standards; meeting the minimum standard in ‘Learning in lessons’, and ‘Well-planned lessons’ (see Table 3.12). The review team noted positive features under ‘Outcomes for students’, including the ‘Learners are actively involved during lessons’. The team also noted positive features under ‘The teaching process’, including ‘Teachers prepare well by having updated schemes of work and lesson plans’, and ‘Teaching and learning resources are planned and used effectively’.

A recommendation was made for ‘leadership’ as follows:

- ‘Student safety should be monitored by all school stakeholders’.

Recommendations for ‘management’ included:

- ‘School data should be displayed e.g. PSLCE, Dropout, Repetition’.

Recommendations under ‘Outcomes for students’ included:

- ‘Learners should be given responsibilities for them to be fully involved during lessons’; and
- ‘Rules should (be) formulated and reinforced’.
Recommendations under ‘The teaching process’ included:

- ‘Assessment items should be prepared and used’; and
- ‘Assessments should be planned in the schemes’.

No good practices were recorded in the school.

Following the second review, the school recorded improved performance: meeting minimum standards in all but one of the six standards (‘Care and welfare of students’ being the exception).

The review team noted a positive feature under ‘management’, including the ‘Punctuality of both learners and teachers’. ‘Responsive attentive learners during lessons’ was noted under the heading ‘Outcomes for Students’. Finally, under ‘The Teaching Process’, the review team noted the ‘Regular assessment of learners’.

In the second review, only two recommendations were made; both under the ‘management’ heading, that is:

- ‘The community must construct additional latrines and teachers’ houses’; and
- ‘Stakeholders must sensitise girls on importance of education and establish by-law’.

Again, no good practices were recorded in the school.

The same general observations on the review reports are noted as for case one (regarding very general recommendations, lack of recommendations against all in scope NES, and not referring back to check progress on recommendations from the previous School Review).

Table 3.12 School Review Scores, Case Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES</th>
<th>First School Review</th>
<th>Second School Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes for Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Care and welfare of students</td>
<td>1. Does not meet minimum standards</td>
<td>1. Does not meet minimum standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Reviews

3.4.4.3 HEAD TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Head Teacher are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The Head Teacher was aware of the second School Review (but not the first) and had found the process useful.
  - Training had been provided by the PEs on the NES, and a copy of the standards provided for the school. The Head Teacher also attended training on the NES at the TDC, which was found to be “very useful”.
While the Head Teacher had received a copy of the written report from the School Review, no school report card had been issued. In addition, the Head Teacher had not used the School Management Simulation Game. The Head Teacher was not aware of when the next School Review would be.

However, the Head Teacher noted that he did meet other Head Teachers once a month to share knowledge, including information on the NES.

- **School Improvements**
  - The Head Teacher noted that there had been “changes in the school in the last year” for example, the number of learners had increased as result of improved teacher performance-with one of the main reasons for this being the School Review.
  - In addition, punctuality of learners had improved, with most learners coming to school on time;
  - The Head Teacher noted the recommendation for construction of toilets and that this was still in progress.
  - In addition, the recommendation to sensitis the community to the issues of early marriage was raised, and that local village chiefs had been encouraged to develop bylaws to reduce early marriage.

- **Community Engagement**
  - It was noted that no meeting had been held with the wider community following the School Review (and that no School Report Card had been issued as noted above). Indeed, the Head Teacher noted that there had been no change in parental involvement in the school, and that parent interest was ‘average’.
  - However, a community meeting was scheduled for the following week.

- **Attribution**
  - It was noted that no other NGOs are working at the school, and that the Head Teacher attributed significant influence to the Link project in supporting school improvements (although it is noted that school does have a feeding programme).

- **Barriers**
  - The Head Teacher indicated that PEA visits were relatively infrequent (at one per term).
  - A shortage of classrooms, toilets and teachers’ houses remains an issue for the school (only three of the 16 teachers live at the school, making travel a significant issue for the remainder).
  - The Head Teacher noted a requirement for more frequent PEA visits in order to encourage teachers and provide more training on the NES.

3.4.4 TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Teachers are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  - The group found the School Review helpful in providing encouragement to teachers, suggesting changes to teaching practice, and informing them of strengths and weaknesses in the school.
  - The teachers highlighted the importance of protection of learners as a finding of the School Review.
  - Teachers indicated that they have seen a copy of the NES and that they had had some training from the Head Teacher. However, they thought more training on the NES was important to develop a thorough understanding.

- **School Improvements**
  - A number of improvements were cited including improvements in the behaviour of children and improvements in the attendance of children.

- **Community Engagement**
o The teachers indicated more communication with parents and the establishment of good relations with parents (including via the PTA and the SMC who met at least once per term).

o The teachers commented that parents need more training in the NES in order to be better informed on their roles and responsibilities.

- **Attribution**
  
  o The teachers were broadly of the view that school improvements were attributable to the INSPIRE project. However, the teachers also noted the importance of meal provision in encouraging attendance.

- **Barriers**
  
  o Significant barriers were cited by teachers including lack of school infrastructure, teaching and learning resources and teachers houses.
  
  o In addition, further visits from PEAs were seen as important in “showing the way forward” for the school.

### 3.4.4.5 PARENT PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the parents are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  
  o The group had participated in a review meeting following the School Review and had found this encouraging by helping to identify areas for school improvement.
  
  o Some group members (SMC and Mother Group) also learned, to a basic level, about the NES at the meeting. Members from the PTA had not heard about the NES. The group would welcome further information and training on the NES.
  
  o Parents indicated that they had not received a School Report Card, but that they had received a verbal report on school performance.
  
  o It was indicated by PTA members that information on the School Review meeting had not been widely shared amongst PTA members and that they did not know the findings of the review (although these were relatively new members).

- **School Improvements**
  
  o The group indicated some positive change since the School Review meeting: provision of additional toilet facilities, and an increase in the number of teachers in the school (to 16).

- **Community Engagement**
  
  o There was a feeling amongst the parents that more work was required to engage the wider community. This should include further information and training on the NES and roles and responsibilities for school improvement.
  
  o Nonetheless, there was a view that the school’s relations with parents were good and improving.

- **Attribution**
  
  o As for other cases, the adoption of a feeding programme was also identified as contributing significantly to increased learner attendance.

- **Barriers**
  
  o The group highlighted the importance of sensitising parents on school improvement needs, as well as construction of teaching blocks, teachers’ houses, and a kitchen for a feeding programme.

### 3.4.4.6 LEARNER PERSPECTIVES

Key points from consultation with the Learners are as follows:

- **Role of NES and School Reviews**
  
  o Learners had low awareness of the NES/School Review process but did confirm routine consultation of learners as part of the School Improvement Plan development.
• **School Improvements**
  - Learners noted an increase in the number of teachers in the school. In addition, behaviour in the schools was better with less “harassment” and a safer environment.

• **Attribution**
  - While the learners were seeing some positive changes in the school, they did not particularly attribute this to the INSPIRE project.

• **Barriers**
  - In relation to attendance, the group cited general poverty and lack of resources as the main reason.

### 3.4.4.7 Conclusion

The School Review process had been operational for two years in the case examined, with a number of development needs identified against the NES. The school staff appeared broadly committed to, and supportive of, the NES framework, and the review process. However, the process appeared less well-embedded than in the other cases, with mixed levels of awareness of review findings amongst stakeholders (possibly due to changes in personnel). The School Report Card tool did not appear to be in use.

Nonetheless, significant progress against the NES standards was seen over the period and all the groups consulted within the school (Head Teachers, Teachers, Parents, and Learners) pointed to a range of recent and significant improvements in the school infrastructure, overall learner performance, and community engagement, with Head Teachers and teachers attributing this in large part to the INSPIRE project.

It is noted that all groups also commented on a general lack of resources within the school as a major limit on achievement.

### 3.5 Progress Towards Overall Aims & Objectives

This section examines the following evaluation questions:

1. To determine the performance of the INSPIRE project against project objectives, including
   a. Inputs, activities, outputs, outcome and impact; and
2. To determine any wider impacts of the INSPIRE project in relation to the overall project aim.

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

This section considers the benefits provided by the service in relation to the ultimate beneficiaries, that is improved learner outcomes, and delivery of high-quality relevant education.

#### 3.5.2 School Review Data

Some 98 schools received two consecutive School Performance Reviews (94 in Mchinji and four in Dedza) using the same six NES standards in both reviews. There was a significant period of time between the reviews: at least 1.1 years between the reviews and an average 688 days between first and second reviews (1.9 years) (minimum 404 days, maximum 909 days).

All of the six standards assessed showed improvement during the period between reviews (see Figure 3.1). In absolute terms, the greatest improvements were in ‘Care and welfare of students’, ‘School self-evaluation and improvement’, and ‘Learning in lessons’ (see Table 3.13). By the second review a majority of schools met minimum standards in three of the six standards. However, the need for further improvement remains high. Table 3.14 provides further detail on the change in NES performance between first and second reviews.

Considering the small number of four Dedza cases in isolation, these all showed improvement in performance, except for one standard (NES 16) (see Table 3.15 and Table 3.16).
Figure 3.1 Per Cent of Schools Meeting or Exceeding National Education Standard

Table 3.13 Absolute Change in Per cent of Schools Meeting or Exceeding Standard between First and Second School Review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES</th>
<th>Change in % Schools Meeting Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life (5)</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate and constructive use of assessment (12)</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-planned lessons (10)</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Lessons (1)</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-evaluation and improvement (16)</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and welfare of students (22)</td>
<td>+36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.14 Change in NES Rating between First and Second School Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES/Level</th>
<th>School Review 1</th>
<th>School Review 2</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life (5)</td>
<td>34 66 0</td>
<td>15 83 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-planned lessons (10)</td>
<td>66 34 0</td>
<td>55 45 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate and constructive use of assessment (12)</td>
<td>95 5 0</td>
<td>89 11 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-evaluation and improvement (16)</td>
<td>65 35 0</td>
<td>41 59 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and welfare of students (22)</td>
<td>85 15 0</td>
<td>49 51 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=98

### Table 3.15 Change in Number of Schools Meeting or Exceeding Standard between First and Second School Review, Dedza Only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES</th>
<th>Change in Number of Schools Meeting Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life (5)</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate and constructive use of assessment (12)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-planned lessons (10)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Lessons (1)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-evaluation and improvement (16)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and welfare of students (22)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES/Level</th>
<th>School Review 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>School Review2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does not meet minimum standards (1)</td>
<td>Meets minimum standards (2)</td>
<td>Exceeds minimum standards (3)</td>
<td>Does not meet minimum standards (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes for Students</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Lessons (1)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life (5)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Teaching Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-planned lessons (10)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate and constructive use of assessment (12)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-evaluation and improvement (16)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and welfare of students (22)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=4. Note that one school did not assess NES 12 in the first School Review.

The remaining schools in the project received one School Review. Analysis of the School Review data indicates that a number of different standards have been used in reviews (see Table 3.17). Variation in the standards assessed allows for customisation of the process to the priorities of particular schools. However, it will also limit that comparability of performance across schools.

Looking at first reviews for all schools, very few schools exceeded minimum standards for any of the standards (see Figure 3.2). However, the majority of schools assessed met standards for:

- School self-evaluation and improvement;
- Learning in lessons;
- Students’ safety and protection;
- Financial management;
- Teachers with good professional, subject and curriculum knowledge; and
- Students’ outcome in the curriculum.

Schools performance was lowest against the following standards:

- Attainment across the school;
- Accurate and constructive use of assessment;
- Students’ behaviour and involvement in school life;
- Teaching for effective learning;
• Teaching which meets the needs of all students;
• Well planned lessons; and
• Care and welfare of students.

It is noted that the format of the raw data obtained from the School Review database makes analysis difficult (i.e. requiring complex restructuring of the data) and should be reviewed. At the moment, each School Review NES standard examined per visit has an individual record (a row of data) on the output spreadsheet. This means data for an individual school are split across multiple rows. For more straightforward analysis, each school must have one record, i.e. one row of data, with consistent column headings relating to school ID, date of visit, standard examined during that visit, results found per standard etc.

Table 3.17 NES Scores, All Schools, First School Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NES/ Level Achieved</th>
<th>Does not meet minimum standards (1)</th>
<th>Meets minimum standards (2)</th>
<th>Exceeds minimum standards (3)</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning in Lessons (1)</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' behaviour and involvement in school life (5)</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-planned lessons (10)</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate and constructive use of assessment (12)</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-evaluation and improvement (16)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care and welfare of students (22)</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching for effective learning (11)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with good professional, subject and curriculum knowledge (9)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ outcomes in the curriculum (2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ safety and protection (6)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching which meets the needs of all students (13)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management (26)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainment across the school (3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.3 Survey Results

This section reports on the findings of the beneficiary survey to extend the analysis of project outcomes and impacts (section 3.2 indicated progress against logframe outcome and impacts. Section 3.4 commented further on these themes using case study evidence).

As noted in section 2.5.3, a representative sample survey of Head Teachers in Mchinji was undertaken in September 2018 (131 Head Teacher responses received, with the number of responses to individual questions varying).

Some 127 out of 128 respondents to the question indicated that the INSPIRE project had been useful or very useful in school improvement in the previous 2 years (see Figure 3.3). The top ranked benefits identified by Head Teachers are noted in Figure 3.4. ‘Community sensitisation/Participation/Cooperation’, ‘Development of Teaching & Learning Resources/Plans’, and ‘Record Keeping & Assessment Process’ were the benefits identified most strongly.

All of the main aspects of the project were found to be useful. However, those aspects of the project that were indicated to be most useful were: ‘Information about the NES’; the ‘School Review and School Feedback Report’; and the ‘Community Meeting to share the School Review Findings’. The aspect that was found to be least useful was the School Management Simulation Training’ (see Table 3.18).
Figure 3.3 How useful has the INSPIRE Project been in school improvement in the last 2 years?

Very useful: 48%
Useful: 52%
Not useful: 1%

n = 128. Note: Over 100% due to rounding (Q1)

Figure 3.4 Top Ranked Benefits from INSPIRE Project

Table 3.18 How useful were the following aspects of the INSPIRE Project in the last two years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Project</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about the National Education Standards</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Review and School Feedback Report</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Meeting to share the School Review findings</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community School Report Card</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone or District Education Conference</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management Simulation Training</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Please Specify</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Q2, n= 130
Head Teachers perceived the benefits of the INSPIRE project to vary by stakeholder group. While all stakeholder groups benefited, most benefit was seen to be gained by ‘Teachers’, followed by ‘Learners’ and ‘School Management Committees’ (see Table 3.19).

In terms of the main benefits of the project for their own role, the Head Teachers identified ‘Improved Leadership and Management Skills’, ‘Improved Work Relations with Community/Staff’, and ‘Improved Record Keeping/Reporting’, as the most prominent benefits. (see Figure 3.5).

Head Teachers were also asked to look forward and consider how much different stakeholder groups would benefit in the short to medium term (1-3 years). Gains from the project were expected to increase in the next few years, with all stakeholder groups benefiting. The greatest benefits were considered to be for ‘Head Teachers’, ‘Learners’, and ‘Other Teachers’ (see Table 3.20).

The top expected benefits to be derived from the project are indicated in Figure 3.6. Head Teachers identified ‘Improved Learner Behaviour and Performance’, ‘Improved School Infrastructure’, and ‘Improved Leadership/Other Skills’, as the most likely future benefits.

Table 3.19 How much have the groups that you work with in School Improvement benefited from the INSPIRE Project in the last two years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management Committees</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community Groups or Individuals</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Q7 n=130

Figure 3.5 Top Benefits to Head Teachers

Note: Q8
Table 3.20 How much will the following groups benefit as a result of your work with the INSPIRE Project (where relevant), in the next 1-3 years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>None at all</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Teachers</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Management Committees</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community Groups or Individuals</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Q16, n=130

Figure 3.6 Top Expected Benefits

Head Teachers were questioned about the role of different stakeholders in supporting school improvement in the last two years. Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) and School Inspectors were both considered very important. However, 84% of Head Teachers reported that PEAs were ‘very important’ versus 69% reporting that School Inspectors were ‘very important’ (see Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.7).

Satisfaction with the role was somewhat mixed: 48% of Head Teachers were ‘very satisfied’ with the support provided by School Inspectors or PEAs, and 50% ‘satisfied’ (see Figure 3.10).

The main ways that PEAs supported Head Teachers in their role are indicated in Figure 3.9. The most significant means of support identified by Head Teachers were: ‘Advising/Guiding’, ‘Improving Record Keeping’, and ‘Providing Supervision/Observation of Work’.

Members of the School Community, while still important, were not seen as significant in supporting school improvement as School Inspectors or PEAs. 54% of Head Teachers thought Members of the School Community were ‘very important’ in supporting the Head Teacher’s role in school improvement in the last two years (see Figure 3.11). Levels of satisfaction with Members of the School Community were not as high as those for School Inspectors and PEAs (32% of Head Teachers reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the support provided by Members of the School Community (see Figure 3.12).
Figure 3.7 Thinking about your work to support school improvement, how important were School Inspectors in supporting you as Head Teacher in the last 2 years?

- Very important: 69%
- Important: 17%
- Not at all important: 3%
- Don’t know: 11%

Note: Q19, n=123

Figure 3.8 Thinking about your work to support school improvement, how important were Primary Education Advisers in supporting you as Head Teacher in the last 2 years?

- Very important: 84%
- Important: 16%
- Not at all important
- Don’t know

Note: Q21, n=130
Figure 3.9 Mains Ways PEAs Supported

- Bridge to DEM: 2.3%
- Training: 10.9%
- Identifying Improvement Areas: 11.6%
- Improving Punctuality (Teachers/Learners): 15.5%
- Community Sensitisation/Communication: 17.1%
- Encouraging: 24.8%
- Providing Supervision/Observation of Work: 31.8%
- Improving Record Keeping: 36.4%
- Advising/Guiding: 41.9%

Note: Q22

Figure 3.10 How satisfied are you with the support provided by School Inspectors and Primary Education Advisers (if relevant)?

- Very satisfied: 48%
- Satisfied: 50%
- Not satisfied: 2%

Note: Q23, n=128
Figure 3.11 Thinking about your work to support school improvement, how important were Members of the School Community in supporting you as Head Teacher in the last 2 years?

![Bar chart showing the importance of Members of the School Community in supporting Head Teachers. Very important: 54%, Important: 45%, Not at all important: 1%.]

Note: Q25, n=129

Figure 3.12 How satisfied are you with the support provided by Members of the School Community?

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels. Very satisfied: 32%, Satisfied: 62%, Not satisfied: 6%.]

Note: Q27, n=130

Of particular relevance to the question of project attribution, many Head Teachers indicated that other non-governmental projects contributed to their ability to support school improvement in the previous two years. Some 40% of Head Teachers indicated that other projects contributed ‘a lot’ and a further 40% that other projects contributed ‘a little’. Only 19% of Head Teachers thought that other projects had not contributed at all (see Figure 3.13). There are a wide range of projects engaging with the INSPIRE schools as indicated in Table 3.21.
Figure 3.13 How much have other non-governmental projects contributed to your ability to support school improvement in the last 2 years?

- A lot: 40%
- A little: 40%
- None at all: 19%
- Don’t know: 2%

Note: Q30, n=129
Table 3.21 Other Non-Governmental Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (valid)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Vision (including Likasi ADP)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping Girls in School (KGIS)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADECOM</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEAR</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Aid</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAWEMA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary's Meals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save the Children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Guides and Boys Scouts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CISE</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Relief Services (CRS)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKARD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merry Year International</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Webber Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEWE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorothy and Evelyn Picketts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Humanities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Education Fund</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIFAC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakachere Malaria Control Programme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Empowerment Network</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trachoma Elimination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tcheru Community Alliance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KACODO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than Brides Alliance/YMECO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mtukula Pakhomo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Labour Practice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KLES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CICOD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENTS with code(s)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENTS without code(s)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANALYZED DOCUMENTS</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Q29

The majority of Head Teachers thought that there had been ‘a few’ or ‘a lot’ of challenges in supporting school improvement in the last two years (see Figure 3.14). The most commonly reported challenges were: ‘Inadequate/Delayed Resources’, ‘Limited Stakeholder Participation/Commitment’, ‘Lack of Stakeholder Training in NES/INSPIRE Process’, and ‘Poor School Infrastructure’ (see Figure 3.15).

A somewhat high proportion of Head Teachers (55%) thought that there had been some negative outcomes from their work with the INSPIRE project in the last two years (see Figure 3.16). The top ranked types of negative outcome are identified in Figure 3.17. The main ones are: ‘Lack of Training / Communication on Project’, ‘Inadequate Resources/Materials for Project’, ‘Demotivated Teacher/Others’ (as a result of the project), and ‘Assessment System Problems’ (giving an unrepresentative picture of school performance).
Figure 3.14 Have you experienced any challenges in supporting school improvement in the last 2 years?

- A lot: 18%
- A few: 79%
- None at all: 3%

Note: Q5

Figure 3.15 Type of Challenges

- Lack of Printed Attendance Registers: 0.8%
- Early Marriage of Learners: 0.8%
- Lack of Knowledge/Resources for Disadvantaged Groups: 1.6%
- Increased Work Burden: 1.6%
- Weather Conditions: 1.6%
- Lack of Stakeholder Understanding of SiP/SIG: 3.2%
- Irregularity/Inconsistency of Process: 3.2%
- Limited Stakeholder Communication: 4.0%
- Confusing/Inadequate Assessment Process: 8.0%
- Late Coming & Absenteeism (Teachers and Learners): 9.6%
- Stakeholder Resistance to Change: 11.2%
- Poor School Infrastructure: 16.8%
- Lack of Stakeholder Training in NES/INSPIRE Process: 35.2%
- Limited Stakeholder Participation/Commitment: 59.2%

Note: Q6 Analysed documents: 130, Documents with Codes: 125,

Figure 3.16 Have there been any negative outcomes from your work with the INSPIRE Project in the last 2 years?

- A lot: 2%
- A little: 53%
- None at all: 44%

Note: Q32
3.5.4 Confounding & Supporting Factors

3.5.4.1 Confounding Factors

Consistent with the SIAS project evaluation, a common theme identified by many of those consulted (at national, district and individual school level) was the lack of resources across the board, including, for example staffing levels, poor building quality, inadequate number of classrooms, and inadequate learning and teaching resources.

A District official in Mchinji also highlighted that a lack of spaces at the secondary school level was a serious problem and acted as a disincentive to primary learners, when even if passing leaving exams, a space for them may not be available at secondary school (e.g. DEM Mchinji, September 2018).

While the case study evidence presented indicates that the schools examined were committed to the implementation of the School Review approach and to school improvement (see section 3.4), there is also a need for continuing work to engage schools in terms of awareness and implementation of the NES, and address the significant resource barriers faced.

The challenges facing schools in implementing improvement measures are further outlined in the survey of Head Teachers, where 97% of respondents cited ‘a few’ or ‘a lot’ of challenges in supporting school improvement in the last 2 years, frequently citing lack of resources as a key issue (see Figure 3.14).

3.5.4.2 Supporting Factors

It has already been highlighted that the strong track record of Link in Dedza, and to a lesser extent, Mchinji, have been important supporting factors. In Dedza, co-location of Link staff with District officials was seen to be an important factor in the success of the SIAS project, and this has continued to be the case throughout the INSPIRE project. It has also already been commented, that while not co-located, the Link staff in Mchinji are also very accessible (Mchinji DEM Comment, September 2018). In addition, a senior DIAS official commented that the INSPIRE project benefited from Mchinji Education officials having very good communications with other departments at district level, and that this was not the case in every district (Senior DIAS official, September 2018).

3.5.5 Conclusion

There is evidence for a range of significant benefits being experienced by participant schools as a result of the application of the School Review approach (including governance, teaching practice, community engagement and learner performance). This is a very encouraging result given the relatively short duration of the INSPIRE
project. These benefits remain to be confirmed in the official education statistics, but there was consistent support for the view across a range of stakeholders within Mchinji and Dedza. The School Review methodology and the use of the NES to support school improvement were widely considered to be effective. In addition, community and learner empowerment featured strongly in consultation with stakeholders, particularly in the case study evidence (presented in more detail in section 3.4), suggesting widespread and systematic engagement with parents and learners in the development of school performance.

However, a strong theme to emerge from the fieldwork was the importance of the challenging wider economic context in which stakeholders and the project operates and which is viewed as a significant barrier to full and effective implementation of the NES and associated school improvement within Mchinji, Dedza and more widely across Malawi.

3.5.6 Lessons & Recommendations

The need for further investment in training and resources to ensure successful and sustained national rollout of the School Review model highlights an opportunity for NGOs and donor partners to continue to support the Government of Malawi in this policy area, in order to ensure the gains from the project, and the momentum behind the process, are maintained.

It is recommended that project successor bodies (MoEST and DIAS) refer to EMIS data in future monitoring and evaluation work on the impacts of the School Review model.

3.6 VALUE FOR MONEY

This section examines the following evaluation questions:

3. To determine if the intervention has put in place mechanisms to ensure sustainability; and
4. To determine the effectiveness, efficiency and overall value for money of the project.

3.6.1 Introduction

The focus of this section is on whether the project represents good use of funds, when comparing the costs of the service against the benefits obtained. Value for money of the programme is assessed in terms of the criteria identified in Table 3.22. This includes analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the service (i.e. the level of outputs achieved for a given set of inputs and has there been improvements in cost-effectiveness over time).

Table 3.22 Value for Money Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Project Cost Drivers</th>
<th>Project resourcing and costs (£) by main channel of support, with commentary and analysis on main cost drivers and trends.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost Savings</td>
<td>Cumulative monetised cost savings (£) disaggregated by a) procurement savings and b) implementation savings with commentary (i.e. examples of where value for money has been enhanced through good practice procurement or management efficiencies.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Costs</td>
<td>Programme management costs as % of total programme costs, with commentary and analysis of trends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficiency</th>
<th>Budget Execution Rate</th>
<th>Project expenditure against budget with commentary and analysis of trends.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Output Implemented</td>
<td>Cost (£) per output implemented with analysis and commentary of trends (i.e. have there been any efficiencies over time in terms of cost per output?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Effectiveness | Qualitative assessment of costs compared with high level project outcomes and impact | Extent to which the project has delivered against its objectives, and a review of the appropriateness of those objectives. What factors have influenced the achievement / non-achievement of the objectives. |
3.6.2 Economy

This section reports on the extent to which the lowest possible price has been achieved for project inputs of the required quality, including the key factors that have influenced costs, significant cost-saving measures, and detailed management costs.

3.6.2.1 Cost Drivers

Project cost drivers are indicated in Table 3.23, Figure 3.18 and Figure 3.19. Over three-quarters of costs have been associated with output implementation (43%), followed by staff costs (33%). These cost drivers have been the main cost drivers in each year of the project.

Table 3.23 Project Cost Drivers (£ Budget)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Drivers</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence</td>
<td>1,899</td>
<td>2,233</td>
<td>2,073</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>7,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Travel</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>5,347</td>
<td>2,673</td>
<td>14,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Costs in Country</td>
<td>1,839</td>
<td>13,324</td>
<td>21,414</td>
<td>5,305</td>
<td>41,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Costs</td>
<td>2,501</td>
<td>31,241</td>
<td>25,459</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>59,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Travel</td>
<td>7,816</td>
<td>15,980</td>
<td>38,879</td>
<td>7,450</td>
<td>70,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Costs</td>
<td>56,599</td>
<td>77,945</td>
<td>84,918</td>
<td>42,859</td>
<td>262,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>64,846</td>
<td>87,492</td>
<td>141,664</td>
<td>55,643</td>
<td>349,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>140,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>230,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>319,754</strong></td>
<td><strong>114,862</strong></td>
<td><strong>804,616</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year3 & 4 Budget

Figure 3.18 Project Cost Drivers by Year

Source: Link Year3 & 4 Budget
Within the leading cost driver, that is, implementation, cost per project Output is indicated in Table 3.24, Figure 3.20 and Figure 3.21. Output Two accounts for the largest share of Output spend (44%), followed by Output Three (20%). The focus of the project, in terms of budget, has varied by year with much greater focus on Outputs Three and Four in year 2017/18.

Table 3.24 Project Costs by Output, 2015-16 to 2018-19 (£ Budget)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Costs</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1</td>
<td>8,986</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2</td>
<td>24,641</td>
<td>43,212</td>
<td>11,527</td>
<td>31,488</td>
<td>110,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12,258</td>
<td>18,395</td>
<td>16,222</td>
<td>46,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8,009</td>
<td>27,979</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35,988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9,537</td>
<td>10,348</td>
<td>7,932</td>
<td>27,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 6</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>8,542</td>
<td>6,660</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E&amp;L</td>
<td>30,736</td>
<td>5,466</td>
<td>26,296</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>62,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination Costs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>2,877</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64,846</td>
<td>87,492</td>
<td>104,366</td>
<td>55,643</td>
<td>312,347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year 3 & 4 Budget
3.6.2.2 COST SAVINGS

A VfM saving is noted where the project has been able to deliver the same results for a lower cost or greater results for the same cost. Procurement savings are derived from negotiating improved purchasing arrangements. Implementation savings are derived from changes made to budgets or results compared to the original budget.

A number of cost saving measures were identified by Link (Link International, Sept 2018), including the following:

- Over the lifetime of the project Link ensured that costs were kept to a minimum by sharing office and travel expenses with other projects;
- Maximising efficiencies in the purchase of stationery (bulk orders);
- Maximising efficiencies in travel to project sites (conducting work for more than one project in a single visit);
• Link supported DIAS to network with other organisations to support for project elements (such as effective use of VSO sub-contractors in database development).

Routine capturing of cost savings measures on a quarterly or annual basis would assist in monitoring the overall value for money of the service (i.e. a note of actions taken, and if possible, a monetised value of the saving measure).

3.6.2.3 IN COUNTRY MANAGEMENT COSTS

In country management costs are 17% of total project costs (see Table 3.25). Management costs are also noted as 69% of overall staff costs (as noted above staff costs represented 31% of overall project costs) (see Table 3.26, Figure 3.22 and Figure 3.23). Management costs, as a share of staff costs, were relatively high throughout the project. Management is defined as Programme Director and Finance/Admin Manager posts, with other posts including Project Managers x2 and Project Officer x1).

This is not necessarily an issue where project outputs are delivered by both management and other staff, but the balance between management and operational staff may be something to consider. A recent SADC water infrastructure project examined had 19% management costs (as share of project costs) with a downward trend to a target of 13% overall (although the projects are not directly comparable).

Table 3.25 Management Costs as Share of Project Costs, Malawi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>38,263</td>
<td>37,863</td>
<td>41,649</td>
<td>20,825</td>
<td>138,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Costs</td>
<td>118,957</td>
<td>161,289</td>
<td>286,202</td>
<td>238,166</td>
<td>804,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year 4 Budget

Table 3.26 Management Costs, Malawi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>38,263</td>
<td>37,863</td>
<td>41,649</td>
<td>20,825</td>
<td>138,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23,653</td>
<td>26,020</td>
<td>13,010</td>
<td>62,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38,263</td>
<td>61,517</td>
<td>67,669</td>
<td>33,835</td>
<td>201,283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year 4 Budget

Figure 3.22 Total management Costs, Malawi

Figure 3.23 Management Costs, Malawi, 2015-16 to 2018-19

Source: Link Year 4 Budget
3.6.3 Efficiency

This section reports on how well the service’s inputs have been converted to outputs in terms of quality and quantity.

3.6.3.1 Budget Execution Rate

The project underspent in years one to three, with the budget being fully utilised in year four through a higher than normal spend rate. However, as discussed in 3.2, project results were mainly realised towards the end of the project life-span. Therefore, budget execution rate averaged 100%, as noted in Table 3.27.

It is noted that a large part of the underspend in the earlier years is due to the devaluation of the Malawian Kwacha against the pound (GBP), which resulted in the activities being achieved at a lower rate of expenditure in GBP. It is Scottish Government policy that the use of underspend must be approved by them, which is done at set intervals connected to reporting cycles, but that there were delays in considering the requests (months in some instances), which is why a lot of the spending did not happen until the end of the project (as commented by a Link team member).

Therefore, the budget utilisation appears appropriate, with no issues, other than the unavoidable delays in approval of using the underspend.

Table 3.27 Budget Execution Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Budget Execution Rate (% of Annual Budget)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year 3 & 4 Budget

3.6.3.2 Indicative Costs per Output

Some indicative costs per output are indicated in the table below (Table 3.24). These do not necessarily include cover of every output type achieved for the overall output budget but give a general indication of the cost per output achieved.

Table 3.28 Selected Project Outputs by Total Output Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Category</th>
<th>Selected Output</th>
<th>Total Output Budget (£)</th>
<th>Cost per Selected Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Output 1</td>
<td>8 ('Number of effective and well attended (over 50% of members) Steering Committee (SC) meetings that support individual department Technical Working Groups (TWGs)' )</td>
<td>9,527</td>
<td>£1,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 2</td>
<td>175 (number of people trained in various aspects of INSPIRE project)</td>
<td>110,868</td>
<td>£634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 3</td>
<td>446 (Number of schools which have an up to date SRC)</td>
<td>46,875</td>
<td>£105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35,988</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 5</td>
<td>116,330 (Number of participants who attend SPAM, zone conference and district conference)</td>
<td>27,817</td>
<td>£0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output 6</td>
<td>447 (Number of schools piloting innovative school improvement interventions (Dedza and Mchinji))</td>
<td>15,685</td>
<td>£35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.4 Qualitative Assessment of Value for Money

Several other value for money considerations are noted below.

Catalytic Effects:
The INSPIRE model promises to act as a catalyst for more and larger scale action. DIAS has confirmed the intention to roll out the School Review process, as resources are available. Senior DIAS officials consulted regarded the INSPIRE project as representing excellent value for money in this regard (senior DIAS official and inspector, September 2018).

Demonstration Effects:
The development of the INSPIRE model along with associated technical assistance and training by DIAS and District partners has led to a number of examples of demonstration effects, including:

- **DIAS Staff**
  - Involvement of centrally based staff has promoted sharing of good practice and building of capacity within the directorate as a whole (the official did not comment on sharing across directorates) (senior DIAS official, September 2018);

- **Primary Education Advisers**
  - Feedback from PEAs indicates sharing of knowledge between advisers within the Dedza and Mchinji Districts (DEM in Dedza and Mchinji, PEAs in Mchinji September 2018); and

- **Schools**
  - Case study schools in Mchinji identified a number of ways in which the School Review, NES and associated practices were shared and discussed with other schools in the District.

Combination Effects:
Integration of the INSPIRE project with other Link and NGO projects is adding value in some cases:

- There are examples of other Link projects contributing to the benefit of the overall project goals; and
- There are examples of the INSPIRE project aligning with the goals of other school-based programme NGO projects including child protection, learner rights and responsibilities, and meal provision (see Head Teacher survey results).

Efficiency Gains:
- The INSPIRE project is achieving efficiency gains through leveraging existing networks. For example, building on established relationships in DIAS and Dedza, this added weight and credibility to the INSPIRE project and, by utilising existing logistical capacity of Link in Malawi, maximised the budget available for the INSPIRE project.

Duplication:
- A well-developed partnership approach with stakeholders has minimised the risk of duplication by the INSPIRE project, and there was no sense from stakeholders that the project was duplicating other efforts in Dedza, Mchinji, or Malawi more widely.

Sustainability:
- A marker of INSPIRE VfM would be sustainability of activity post-funding. This evaluation offers four insights on this:
  - The commitment of DIAS and the MoEST to the roll out and development of the model appears high, as is Government of Malawi investment in the education sector generally;
  - Evidence from Head Teachers points to the expectation of persistent benefits;
  - There is evidence of other institutions in the education sector, as well as NGOs, adopting the NES in their work (building on the INSPIRE project and earlier Link projects), e.g. VSO, GiZ and the World Bank were mentioned by DIAS officials, and it is also understood that UNICEF and CARE Malawi have also reflected the NES in their work;
  - However, as discussed earlier, failure to secure funding for a follow-on Link project, seeking to reinforce aspects of the INSPIRE model was unsuccessful (although other Link projects may be able to take forward relevant work).
3.6.5 Equity

3.6.5.1 Geography

Some 69% of staff costs are accounted for by Malawi-based personnel. The remainder are allocated to staff based in Scotland. This has remained largely consistent over the life of the project. Staff costs by geography are indicated in Table 3.28., Figure 3.24, and Figure 3.25.

Table 3.29 Staff Costs by Geography (£)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Costs</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>17,659</td>
<td>16,428</td>
<td>17,249</td>
<td>9,025</td>
<td>60,361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>38,940</td>
<td>61,517</td>
<td>67,669</td>
<td>33,835</td>
<td>201,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>56,599</td>
<td>77,944</td>
<td>84,918</td>
<td>42,859</td>
<td>262,321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year 4 Budget

3.6.5.2 Gender

The following three logframe indicators were defined as disaggregated by gender:

- **Impact Indicator 1** (% of learners, disaggregated by gender (and other, e.g. Special Education Needs, Orphans, ultra-poor, if available) passing the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education PSLCE; Number and % of learners (disaggregated) repeating Standard 1 and 5);
- **Impact Indicator 2** (‘Number and % of learners (disaggregated) passing the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE); ‘Number and % of learners (disaggregated) repeating Form 4 (Education Sector Improvement Plan p.59). NB the baseline figures are for Malawi as a whole; the project baseline will capture district level); and
- **Output 5.4** (Number of participants (disaggregated) who attend SPAM, zone conference and district conference).

Disaggregated results are not provided for Output 5.4. Results for the remaining two indicators are shown in Table 3.29 and Table 3.30. For pass rates at PSLCE, performance for boys and girls is better than target, although there is significantly better performance for boys than girls. Pass rates at MSCE are also significantly
higher for boys than girls (although the former is somewhat worse than target and the latter somewhat better than target).

There is little difference in repetition rates between girls and boys and both are significantly worse than target (the issues accounting for this state of affairs are discussed in 3.2).

Some supplementary monitoring by gender is also reported (see Box 3.2 on page 10), indicating that:

- Total direct beneficiaries: 71,720 (54% female). Total indirect beneficiaries: 142,100 (48% female);
- 71 government staff (27% female) trained in School Review, Schools Integrated Information System database and app, and integrated school, zone and district planning; and
- 71,473 community members (55% female) participated in community meetings about school performance, Zone Conferences and District Conference, with additional stakeholders reached through radio participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLCE pass rate</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition at all Standards</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual Mchinji</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLCE pass rate</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition at all Standards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual Dedza</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSLCE pass rate</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition at all Standards</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe

Table 3.31 Impact Indicator Two by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
<th>Boys (%)</th>
<th>Girls (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE pass rate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition at Form Four</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSCE pass rate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link Year End of Project Logframe

3.6.6 Conclusion

The project demonstrates good value for money in a number of ways. Perhaps most significantly the project has provided a thoroughly piloted model for national adoption and rollout of the School Review approach and associated data collection and monitoring tools (while further embedding the NES, advisory and inspection processes). Given the pressing need for education improvement in Malawi and the scale of investment in the sector by the Government of Malawi (as a share of national wealth), it is important that that investment is channelled to the best effect. The INSPIRE project has made a significant impact in that regard, and this influence is likely to be sustained if officials are able to match resources to their commitments.

Available monitoring evidence reports that the project was effective in targeting beneficiaries by gender. However, future projects should explore procedures to monitor gender and other relevant characteristics (e.g. categories of disadvantage) across a wider number of logframe indicators (e.g. those for Output 2 training activities).
3.6.7 Lessons & Recommendations

Ensure mechanisms are in place to record the gender of beneficiaries and other relevant categories of disadvantage (e.g. attendees at meetings/ training events).
4 CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on the findings presented, this section presents several overall conclusions as well as a list of specific recommendations for consideration.

Strategic Fit and Contribution

The project goals are strongly aligned with Link, Malawi Government, and Scottish Government policies, and the rationale for the project remains valid.

Progress Toward Targets and Indicators

The project has met the majority of logframe targets, within budget, and with progress against all but one of the others (where no data was available). However, at the impact level, high levels of learner repetition remain a problematic issue.

Attribution of benefits to Link at the output level is likely to be high (i.e. these benefits are unlikely to have been achieved without Link intervention). At the impact level (i.e. wider benefits), as anticipated, it the view of this report that the attribution of the logframe impact indicators is moderate – i.e. these high-level benefits to learners are unlikely to be fully attributable to Link due to the widespread influence of other interventions.

Management Content & Delivery

The management, content and delivery of the project has been effective, reflecting a flexible and responsive approach with stakeholders. The findings suggest that significant progress has been made in the implementation of School Reviews and associated activities at District level in Mchinji and to a lesser extent Dedza, and at the national level in the close working relationships and capacity building with DIAS.

Of particular significance, is the approach to work in partnership at national and district levels, which has helped to match the project to the needs of stakeholders. Limitations of the project at secondary school / divisional level are noted.

The development of the approach within primary schools at District level is progressing and the project has played a leading role in influencing the development of the school improvement process, further roll-out of which now falls to DIAS.

The sustainability of the approach developed is subject to the ownership and continued commitment and roll out by Malawi authorities. This report identifies a high degree of ownership and commitment by MoEST and DIAS to sustain the work of the INSPIRE project through national rollout. However, the widespread establishment of the approach across Malawi is a work in progress and will require significant ongoing resource.

Progress Towards Overall Aims & Objectives

There is evidence for a range of significant benefits being experienced by participant schools as a result of the application of the School Review approach (including governance, teaching practice, community engagement and learner performance). This is a very encouraging result given the relatively short duration of the INSPIRE project. These benefits remain to be confirmed in the official education statistics, but there was consistent support for the view across a range of stakeholders within Mchinji and Dedza.

The School Review methodology and the use of the NES to support school improvement were widely considered to be effective. In addition, community and learner empowerment featured strongly in consultation with stakeholders, particularly in the case study evidence (presented in more detail in section
3.4), suggesting widespread and systematic engagement with parents and learners in the development of school performance.

However, a strong theme to emerge from the fieldwork was the importance of the challenging wider economic context in which the stakeholders and the project operates and which is viewed as a significant barrier to full and effective implementation of the NES and associated school improvements within Mchinji, Dedza and more widely across Malawi.

**Value for Money**

The project demonstrates good value for money in a number of ways. Perhaps most significantly the project has provided a thoroughly piloted model for national adoption and rollout of the School Review approach and associated data collection and monitoring tools (while further embedding the NES, advisory and inspection processes). Given the pressing need for education improvement in Malawi and the scale of investment in the sector by the Government of Malawi (as a share of national wealth), it is important that that investment is channelled to the best effect. The INSPIRE project has made a significant impact in that regard, and this influence is likely to be sustained if officials are able to match resources to their commitments.

Available monitoring evidence reports that the project was effective in targeting beneficiaries by gender. However, future projects should explore procedures to monitor gender and other relevant characteristics (e.g. categories of disadvantage) across a wider number of logframe indicators (e.g. those for Output 2 training activities).

### 4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that future projects systemically check all logframe indicators for viability and where feasible develop alternative measures as a back-up in the event that key measures are not available;
2. It is recommended that consideration is given to the inclusion of both gross and net indicators in future project monitoring where this is proportionate (it is noted that subsequent Link projects are adopting methods that permit this type of analysis);
3. For projects with a large technical component, seek to establish committee structures that don’t unduly slow down decision-making (e.g. a main committee delegating some decision-making to a technical sub-committee);
4. In any successor activities, work with DIAS and other relevant departments such as Secondary and Planning Directorates too further understand, support and resolve difficulties in engaging secondary schools and divisional stakeholders in the school improvement process;
5. In any successor activities, consider, where resources permit, providing a ‘follow-up pack’ for the Simulation Game, that can be retained by schools for in-house consolidation of skills;
6. In any successor activities, work with DIAS to develop a means for further developing and maintaining the SIIS database, including an online, ‘live’ functionality;
7. Continue dialogue with appropriate NGOs and other donor partners to continue to support the Government of Malawi in this policy area, in order to ensure the gains from the SIAS and INSPIRE projects, and the momentum behind the process, is not lost;
8. Enhance efforts to document the gender of beneficiaries and other relevant categories of disadvantage (e.g. attendees at meetings/ training events);
9. While learner performance has improved overall, repetition rate remains higher than target. This suggests that stronger learners are improving their performance, but the weaker learners are still being left behind. Further investigation is recommended to understand to what extent school or home factors influence this, and what can be done to ensure all learners are improving.
A. **EVALUATION QUESTIONS BY REPORT SECTION**

For reference, the table below lists the evaluation questions by the report section in which they are discussed.

**Appendix Table 1 Evaluation Questions by Report Section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Report Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To determine the performance of the INSPIRE project against project objectives, including:</td>
<td>3.2, 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Inputs, activities, outputs, outcome and impact;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The extent to which targets have been reached;</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The strategic fit and contribution to Government of Malawi and Scottish Government objectives and to the Sustainable Development Goals;</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To determine any wider impacts of the INSPIRE project in relation to the overall project aim;</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To determine if the intervention has put in place mechanisms to ensure sustainability;</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To determine the effectiveness, efficiency and overall value for money of the project;</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To determine the success of the management and delivery arrangements, highlighting any improvements that may be considered, including partnership arrangements; and</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To determine any other lessons learned and any recommendations for future delivery (considering the findings of the mid-term evaluation).</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. THEORY OF CHANGE

Improved learner outcomes in Mehindi District

Schools in Mehindi deliver high quality relevant education to all

ESRC Produced for every school in Mehindi

Schools have up to date database

Schools produce effective, relevant, realistic SIPs

Activities:
- Develop and maintain solar ventilation system (solar and IT) through training for SIAPs in Mehindi
- Develop electronic school report card (ESRC) for every school in Mehindi

Activities:
- Conduct educational assessment every year 2, 50%, (45) to review school performance and make recommendations to schools and districts using MSIP, PSIPs, and SEMA analysis of SIPs to ensure balance of priorities across school needs and then identify priority areas for action and support.
- Data from MSIP and other sources entered into ESRC database by census staff

Activities:
- School Management Information System (SMIS) provided by all schools in Mehindi

Activities:
- Development of financial management system (eDMIS) in Mehindi

Activities:
- Two education conferences held in Mehindi
- District Education Plan (DEP) targets for the year achieved by the districts

Activities:
- Train MIS staff on using data from NIDS and ESRC to inform integrated planning from school to district to central level.

For Mehindi:
- System for sharing accurate school performance data at community, school, zone, district, and central levels
- ESRC database and tools
- Schools have up to date database
- Schools produce effective, relevant, realistic SIPs
- Participants attend zone, time, and district conferences

Activities:
- Develop more integrated ICSE database (ESRC) for every school in Mehindi

Activities:
- Improved learner outcomes in Mehindi District

Activities:
- Implement innovative school improvement interventions in Mehindi

Activities:
- Schools hold schools and districts accountable for delivering effective education (meeting SIP targets)
- Community contribute to SIP monitoring

Activities:
- Schools achieve at least 5 out of a maximum of 6 SIP targets for the year
- Reports and plans by MoECS which directly refer to data from school and district level

Activities:
- Develop innovative school improvement intervention and pilot in 50 schools in Mehindi

Activities:
- Full integration of central division-district school improvement plans developed, led by MoECS

Activities:
- School staff have solar connection and IT tools

Activities:
- Authority and guidance and guidance from MoECS departments to drive fully integrated central division-school level education planning to support systemic change in Mehindi

Activities:
- MOECS, Mehindi School, and central division-staff understand how to use MIHI school improvement and support tools (MIHI), level quality relevant education to all

Activities:
- MOECS, Mehindi, and central division-staff understand how to use MIHI school improvement and support tools (MIHI), level quality relevant education to all

Activities:
- MOECS, Mehindi, and central division-staff understand how to use MIHI school improvement and support tools (MIHI), level quality relevant education to all
C. **TOPICS GUIDES**

Copies of the topic guides are available to download from the following link:

https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Abf6857db-d19a-44fe-9434-dc94ec8345f0

D. **LIST OF CONSULTEES**

A list of individuals included in the consultation programme is indicated in the table below (Appendix Table 2)

**Appendix Table 2 List of Consultees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji District</td>
<td>District Education Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji District</td>
<td>Primary Education Advisers (PEAs) (3 of which 2 males, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 1</td>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 1</td>
<td>Teachers (4, of which 3 males, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 1</td>
<td>Parents (5, of which 4 males, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 1</td>
<td>Learners (4, of which 3 males, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>Mother Group (4 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>PTA (2, 1 male, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>SMC (2, of which 2 males, 2 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 2</td>
<td>Learners (4, of which 2 males, 2 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>Head Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>PTA (3 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>Mother Group (4 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>Learners (2, of which 1 male, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>SMC (2 male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mchinji Primary School 3</td>
<td>Teachers (2 male, 1 female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAS</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAS</td>
<td>Principal Inspector &amp; INSPIRE Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link International</td>
<td>International Programme Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link Malawi</td>
<td>Project Manager, Mchinji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link Malawi</td>
<td>Project Manager, Dedza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. **SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

A copy of the survey questionnaire is available to download from the following link:

https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Ascds%3AUS%3Ab7cd61b-a7fe-4942-9f8c-0da98e493d21