



MALAWI

**COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MALAWI - 2003-2005**

February 2003

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| AIDS | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| ANCEFA | Africa Network for the Campaign on Education for All |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisations |
| CEF | Commonwealth Education Fund |
| CERT | Centre for Education Research and Training |
| EFA | Education For All |
| GCE | Global Campaign on Education |
| HIV | Human Immune-deficiency Virus |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PIF | Policy Investment Framework |
| PRSP | Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper |
| RBA | Rights Based Approach |
| SANCEFA | Southern Africa Network for the Campaign on Education for All |
| TV | Television |
| UNICEF | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation |
| UNESCO | United States Agency for International Development |

COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MALAWI - 2003-2005

0. INTRODUCTION

As a follow up to the resolutions made at the CEF management meeting in August, recruitment of the coordinator and the accountant were done and they reported for duties. A meeting was organised with civil society organizations, church network and the coalition to review the interim strategic plan, which resulted in the production of this strategic document, and the 2003 annual plan (annexed). To facilitate focus on the three criterions civil society organizations, the coalition, church network and the media were oriented on CEF, and advertisements were made in local newspapers calling for participation in the CEF activities.

The management comments on the interim strategy have been addressed in this document. During the workshop with the coalition and civil society organizations, capacity building was emphasized for the strategic document to be effectively implemented. With this in mind, capacity building is the first item to be addressed in this strategic plan targeting both the CSOs and the community.

As HIV/AIDS is a big issue in Malawi having negative impact on education, deliberate efforts have been made to include civil society organizations working on HIV/AIDS prevention, mitigation, and promoting gender equity in the schools and the community.

2. CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Education in Malawi has experienced major changes since the advent of Multiparty Democracy and the introduction of free primary education in 1994. As a result of free primary education, school enrollment almost doubled from 1.8 million to 3.2 million between 1994 and 1997. Increased enrolment however, resulted in the need to expand the secondary school sub-sector. Further, the tertiary education sub-sector had to grow and led to the establishment of an additional University. The consequences have been lack of resources that include inadequate funding; and shortage of teachers. For example, in most urban schools the pupil teacher ratio is 1:120, while in the rural areas the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:150 forcing the government to employ 25,000 unqualified teachers who now constitute more than half of the teaching work force. This number is still inadequate and there is uneven distribution of teachers with a concentration in urban areas. The impact of HIV/AIDS in the education sector is also a great problem needing urgent attention. For example in 2000/2001, about 6000 teachers died of HIV/AIDS related illnesses. The rate of death is greater than that of recruitment leaving huge gaps in the teaching force.

Often, teachers do not even possess a syllabus; the curriculum is overloaded and need to be revised to address gender issues, and life skills. Enrolment and attendance especially in the rural areas needs improvement. Dropout rates, particularly for girls are very high. According to the Government of Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (2000), drop out rates are higher for girls and in the rural areas. For instance, the male drop out rate was estimated at 9.5% for boys and 14.1% for girls (for more detail see section 4- gender issues). Many pupils actually leave school without even acquiring basic literacy skills. For instance, for women aged more than 25 years, 47% attended school but only 2.4% completed primary school. And for those who stay in school, absenteeism is very common especially during the farming season.

There is a lack of adequate teacher trainers and this reduces the quality of trained teachers. There is inadequate teaching and learning materials with for example: a textbook - pupil ratio of 1:4.

Many pupils (about 38,000) learn under trees, due to shortage of classrooms, and during the rains such makeshift learning under such outdoor conditions is disrupted. Supervision is not adequate due to limited number of personnel and logistical constraints (e.g. lack of transport) due to funding shortfalls. The issue of quality education remains crucial in the Malawi education system.

The above situation led to major shifts in Civil Society/NGOs activities from service delivery such as school construction and the provision of school materials to more policy and advocacy work intended to improve the quality of education. This important shift therefore aims to address causes and not just effects affecting education in the country. However, according to a research report produced for USAID by the Centre for Education Research and Training (CERT), University of Malawi: *The changing roles of NGOs in education in Malawi- March 2000*, the number of NGOs with an explicitly stated advocacy mandate is still very small. This is an important gap in policy work in Malawi, and greater mobilization is necessary. The reports further says that CSOs/NGOs have realized the need for them to be actively engaged in policy development processes as key development partners in the education sector.

A unique initiative has been the formation of the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education in Malawi. The Coalition was formed to make it possible for CSOs involved in the education sector to be better organized, and achieve greater results by working closely together. The main aim is: *“To achieve measurable change in the quality of basic education by 2005 through supporting and influencing the implementation of government policy in the Policy Investment Framework (PIF); National EFA plan and PRSP”*.

For the first time, CSOs actually provided input in the development of the Malawi PRSP. Their recommendation to include the Education Sector among the Priority Poverty Expenditure Areas was accepted. Furthermore the government endorsed involvement of CSOs in budget monitoring. The work of the coalition in the education budget monitoring was appreciated and included in official report of the Budget and Finance Committee of the National Assembly June 2002. In future the coalition and other CSOs plan to involve community members in budget planning and monitoring in line with decentralization, accountability and community empowerment. The Minister of Education in his comments on the CEF also stressed the need to fill this gap.

It is important to note that the significant change in the political and governance environment in Malawi has created much opportunity and space for CSOs to be able to do this type of policy work. Parliamentary committees have over the past couple of years, been keener to work with and listen to CSOs. *However there is still much room for improvement particularly in the enhancement of capacity of CSOs and communities to engage in policy processes in education.*

In 2004 Malawi will be conducting general elections, it is likely that the government may divert its attention from education and other social services to pre-election campaigns. This requires civil society organizations to intensify monitoring the education budget and the delivery of quality basic education services.

As follow up to the Dakar EFA conference, a meeting was conducted to facilitate the formation of an EFA National Forum to implement the agreed EFA action plans. The Malawi government through the Ministry of Education formed an interim task force to oversee the formation of the EFA Nation Forum, which was to be responsible for the coordination, and implementation of the action plans. Though set up rather late, this development was a major break through for Malawi. UNICEF funded the meeting and UNESCO provided technical support.

The meeting, which involved both government and CSOs, debated potential obstacles towards achieving Education for All in Malawi. A number of papers were presented looking at existing gaps, problems and challenges in the education sector. Some of the issues that came out were:

0. The impact of HIV/AIDS on education: the death of teachers, parents, pupils, problem of orphans pose a threat towards achieving education for all;
0. Gender disparity: issues of gender are in most cases not taken into consideration when planning. The negative attitude towards girls education needs to be addressed;
0. Early Childhood education is a nightmare in Malawi with only 5% of children aged 0 to 5 having access to this type of education. How could EFA be realistic with this problem?;
0. The issue of compulsory education which is being called for in the 6 Dakar goals is another challenge as it goes with political and legislature implications;
0. The issue of special needs education is another area that requires to be considered when strategizing for EFA.

The meeting achieved the following:-

- The formation of National EFA forum
- The creation of National EFA secretariat in the Ministry of Education
- Production of Malawi EFA draft action plan

3. COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION FUND

In response to the current state of education in Malawi outlined in section 1 above, the CEF will enhance efforts by the Civil Society Coalition and other CSOs to enable them advocate on education issues to improve the quality of education in Malawi.

3.1 NATIONAL LEVEL CEF PROCESS

After the announcement of the CEF, ActionAid Malawi, Save the Children Fund-UK and Oxfam Great Britain discussed the initiative and agreed that Actionaid Malawi should be the national lead agency. Then detailed presentations on the CEF were planned and done. The first one was made to the civil society coalition representatives. On 1st June another presentation was made to a larger group of civil society coalition members, and it is at this meeting that a coalition member was appointed to attend the July CEF meeting in Nairobi. A feedback session was organized where, all coalition members and other CSOs were invited to be briefed about the deliberations of the Nairobi meeting. It was at this meeting that issues to be incorporated in this strategic plan were discussed. However, roles were also shared among the members to consult different stakeholders such as the community, children, Parliamentary Committee on education, donor agencies, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Gender, Youth and Community services. The interim strategic plan was reviewed by the coalition, church education network, media and civil society organizations, the meeting agreed that all the issues raised in the interim strategic plan are of importance as a result very few changes were made to this document.

The CEF management committee will be making contacts with the private sector to sensitize and lobby for support to the initiative.

The management committee comprises of the Country Director of ActionAid, the Country Representative of Oxfam and the Deputy Country Director of Save the Children Fund, while the coordinator will act as a secretary without voting rights. Terms of reference for this committee have been outlined and specific roles and responsibilities of each agency are being developed. The management committee agreed to be meeting every two months.

3.2 THE CEF NATIONAL STRATEGY

The following objectives and activities will be carried over the next three years. Some of the activities are starting this year, while other activities will start in the second year and continue until 2005. Every 6 months reviews will be carried out with CSOs and the coalitions to assess progress of each activity.

GOAL/AIM

To build the capacity of CSOs to achieve measurable change in the quality of basic education in Malawi through influencing the design and implementation of government education policy.

Criteria 1: Strengthen civil society participation in design and implementation of national and local education plans especially through support for broad based national alliances and coalitions

Objective 1 – Build the capacity of the civil society coalition and other civil society organisations for effective participation in the design and implementation of national and local education plans and frameworks

Activities

- Support the training of CSOs in advocacy and policy issues
- Support the training of CSOs in research skills
- Support the training of CSOs in monitoring and evaluation
- Support the training of CSOs in rights based issues for example HIV/AIDS, gender, Human rights etc
- Support the training of CSOs on the decentralization process
- Support CSOs on EFA sensitization

Expected outcomes

- The civil society coalition and other CSOs able to effectively advocate on policy issues affecting the education sector;
- Positive policy changes in the education sector, e.g. gender sensitive programming, M&E, curriculum review and teacher training.
- Cross cutting issues (HIV/AIDS, Human rights, gender etc) adequately addressed.
- CSOs ability to carry out relevant research
- Gender equity in schools and communities
- Effective advocacy and lobbying strategies developed and implemented

Objective 2

Promote advocacy and lobbying

Activities -

- Support initiated review meetings with policy makers and other education stakeholders including Donors, Parliamentary Committee and the Private Sector
- Support CSOs' involvement in strategy and policy formulation, e.g. Plans development, budgets allocation, decentralization decisions and teacher training
- Support CSOs to influence government to carry out necessary education policy reforms including suitable infrastructure, curriculum reform, and incentives for girls and other disadvantaged children and the implementation of EFA goals

- Support the development of advocacy skills at community level (PTA, SMC, VDC Religious groups etc)

Expected outcomes

- Positive changes and fast implementation of Education Policies
- Flexibility of Donor funding conditions in education.
- Increased participation in curriculum development, teacher training programme and other education policy formulation programme
- Positive policy reforms towards quality basic education
- EFA goals implemented by the government

Objective 3 – Promote campaigns on specific education issues including national, regional and global agenda and events

Activities

- Support the training of CSOs on campaign tactics.
- Support the development of campaign tools.
- Support CSOs to carry out campaigns on education.
- Provide technical and financial support to CSOs to be involved in GCE and national education networks.

Expected outcomes

- Campaign activities planned, and carried out effectively
- Positive policy changes observed in the education sector

Criteria 2: Enable local communities to monitor spending on education both at national and local levels (budget analysis/tracking)

Objective 1 - Enhance the capacity of communities and enable them monitor the education budget and expenditure

Activities –

- Support the development and dissemination of budget monitoring tools
- Support CSOs in the mobilization, formation and training of community budget monitoring structures
- Support the training of community structures in the monitoring of the education budget and expenditure
- Support the collection, analysis and dissemination of monitoring data and results to stakeholders and policy makers
- Support CSOs and community sensitization on PRSP (the education budget)

Expected outcomes

Effective and accountable use of resources targeted for the education sector
 Increased capacity of CSOs in supporting community budget monitoring activities
 Increased community capacity and effectiveness in the monitoring of the education budget and expenditure
 Effective and accountable use of resources targeted for the education sector.

Increased community capacity and effectiveness in monitoring of the education budget and expenditure

Criteria 3: To support innovative ways for communities to ensure that all children (especially girls and the most vulnerable) are able to access quality education within the framework of national education plans - in a way that links to advocacy

Objective 1 – Support CSOs to identify relevant issues affecting quality basic education especially for girls and the most disadvantaged children and be able to isolate them for policy reforms.

Activities

- Support CSOs to conduct relevant research on issues affecting quality basic education
- Support the dissemination of research findings and usage in education policy and programming
- Support CSOs to assess the impact of the newly introduced decentralization system in education sector, and advocate for improvements and reforms.

Expected outcomes

- Identification of advocacy issues on education (including decentralization) and advocating for positive changes
- Conducive policy changes and improvement in the quality of education
- Disadvantaged children including the girl child have equitable access to quality basic education and career opportunities

Objective 2 – Support public awareness and involvement on education issues to achieve positive changes in the education sector

Activities

- Support CSOs to set up an effective education information and communication system
- Support CSOs to conduct local and national debates, press conferences and Press releases on relevant education issues
- Support media (radio, TV and newspaper) documentaries on key education issues
- Support the introduction of a local newsletter

Expected outcomes

- Increased public awareness and involvement in the delivery of quality basic education
- Communities empowered to demand their rights to quality education
- Improved services by government and other stakeholders in providing all children with quality education in an equitable and accountable manner

Objective 3 - Provide a conducive and suitable learning environment to enhance the education of girls and disadvantaged children

Activities-

- Support civil society in their collaborative effort with the Ministry of education to strengthen counseling services and life skills programmes.

- Support civil society to sensitize teachers, parents and pupils to remove traditional attitudes as regards career choices of girls
- Support civil society on innovative programmes for girls and children with disabilities to access quality education.

Expected outcomes

- Girls and children with disabilities achieving quality basic education and enjoying career prospects in equal proportion to boys.
- Girls and children with disabilities duly recognized in the society and playing major roles in the country's socio-economic development.

6. LINKS BETWEEN NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WORK

The CEF is an additional opportunity to strengthen and enhance the attainment of quality basic education in poor countries. It reinforces the initiatives that already exist at national, regional and global level. The emphasis on policy influencing, promotion of CSO engagement and special attention to girls and other marginalized children in poor countries is a great complement to our program work. Closely linking the CEF with other initiatives will ensure synergy and avoid duplication of efforts and resources. The work on the ground/local level will provide material for policy and program reform at national, regional and international/global level. Similarly, education agenda at the international, regional and national levels will be tested on the ground. What we promote in all directions will depend on what works out well especially in a practical sense. There will also be horizontal and lateral learning and support between countries implementing the CEF and other education initiatives. Special interest will be on the GCE, National Education Policy Framework and strategies, Elimu/ANCEFA and the Millennium Development Goals. And the common objectives and targets of all these initiatives, strategies and plans will serve as benchmarks for monitoring and impact assessment. Achievements on these targets will be captured, documented and shared across the board for greater learning. The linkage is a continuance process through out the project period.

5. GENDER ISSUES

The educational advancement for girls is constrained by a combination of economic, social and cultural factors. The consultation that was held with the Minister of gender, highlighted the following factors as contributing to the girl child's failure to advance in education.

- High drop out of girls in schools due to early pregnancy. *The revised policy that allows girl mothers to return to school does not always work due to social and cultural unease affecting such girls in school*
- Biased educational materials and facilities entrenching gender based discrimination i.e. lack of toilet facilities, lack of desks and chairs that force a girl child to seat on the floor while their male counterparts sit on the chairs. This encourages shyness to answer questions and promote laziness in girl child to go to school.
- The orphan girl (including caused by HIV/AIDS) takes up domestic/household responsibility earlier than an orphan boy of the same age. This is a burden to the girl's concentration in education versus house chores

- A girl with a disability feels isolated and neglected to associate with the rest at school and lack of facilities to enhance her capability to schooling undermines her ability to educational advancement
- Lack of civic education on the importance of education. Culture impedes such vital information as it promotes education for boys and promotes marriage for girls.
- Lack of economic empowerment. Several parents have opted to generate funds from their girl child. This they do by promoting immorality, early marriages and girl child labour. On the other hand, they only prioritize school for boys.

These issues could be addressed if the government and civil society make a serious commitment to address the escalating problem of teenage pregnancy in schools and out of school system by establishing pro-active programme interventions. Stiffer punishment for teacher misbehaviour must be stepped up. A more pragmatic approach to the problem of girl child labour, prostitution and girl trafficking in urban and rural areas must be adopted. Parents should have access to civic education on girl child education so that they develop the capacity and need to educate their girls. They should be able to identify cultural implications impeding the girl and develop a reformed choice for a better future of their girl child. Educational facilities should be reviewed to remove gender bias and stereotyped examples that entrench gender discrimination. Therefore the CEF will facilitate activities that will promote girl child education.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There are several levels against which the project will be monitored.

In the implementation period, the CEF coordinator and the CEF Management Committee will monitor activities of CSOs and the coalition.

Review meetings will be held 6 monthly with representatives of CSOs and the coalition including the three agencies.

Key decisions on CSOs funded through the CEF and the use of the funds will be taken at the Management Committee meetings and will be directly monitored at that point.

Following funding of the CSOs and coalition, regular monitoring will continue, looking at the success of the various plans of CSOs and coalition. The views of the beneficiaries will be considered and fed into the overall review of the programme and future planning of any subsequent funding of activities.

The UK coordinator and neighbouring countries will be encouraged to participate in the annual reviews. The forum will also be used as an opportunity for sharing ideas within the sub-regions, regions, and the international level.

After three years, the project will be fully evaluated to assess the impact the CEF has provided in achieving quality education in Malawi according to the three criteria and the objectives set out in the proposal (*these also are compatible with those of the CEF*).

The overall indicators of achievement for the project as a whole will be increased access by both boys and girls and vulnerable and marginalised children to quality education

Immediate indicators of achievements for the whole project will be areas of engagement the CSOs and coalition are tackling in the effort of promoting quality education. The other area will

be the response of the government and the donor community in responding to education issues raised by the civil society.

Indicators of achievement at the project output level include most importantly the number of CSOs showing interest to pursue education issues as a right for all children regardless of race, sex, culture differences, vulnerability etc (more details see logframe attached)

7. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Based on the current situation, it is assumed that the government will continue involving the civil society in debates and initiatives aimed at improving quality education in the country. It is assumed that there will be continued political will to achieve quality basic education for Malawi in line with set national and international targets. And that there will be continued support for the relevant government line ministries and donor community

It is assumed that CSOs/NGOs will be transparent in their activities and expenditure to win the trust of the government and donors for constructive discussion and support in the effort of promoting education for all.

It is assumed that political stability shall remain, and that no natural disaster (e.g. emergencies) will occur that will divert the focus of CSOs/NGOs government and other partners from pursuing quality education to humanitarian service provision.

The effects of HIV/AIDS on teacher, parents may impact on the education system negatively, thus affecting quality of education.

It is assumed that the coalition members will continue working together with a common goal of achieving measurable change in the quality of education.

8. TIME FRAME AND SUPPORT NEEDED

First Year - The period between February 2003 to December 2003 is for start up activities where a common stand will be reached for the use of the fund. Start up implementation during this period.

Second Year – From January 2004 to December 2004 the programmes will be fully implemented, and monitored. Issues and gaps affecting the implementation will be identified and relevant strategies put in place to address them.

Third Year – From January 2005 to December 2005, the CEF activities will be consolidated. Lessons will be drawn and further strategies and activities will be designed. This process will end with a final **Evaluation and Reporting**.

The managing agencies will need relevant and timely technical support as the CEF is being implemented. These would include, regular updates on issues concerning the fund, information sharing between commonwealth country beneficiaries, timely disbursement of funds, and support and appraisal visits by the CEF Coordinator. We would also need support to facilitate linkages with key people or parties supporting the CEF and who have a presence or a link in Malawi.

9. FUNDING

DFID will provide funding to the CEF Management Committee in UK. Malawi will get its allocation through the National Management Committee led by Actionaid Malawi. The initial £450,000 that Malawi will receive will be spent as (see attachment)

ANNEX 1: 2003 ANNUAL PLAN.

| ACTIVITIES | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Annual of Proposals | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Criteria 1, objective1. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.1.Support the training of CSOs in advocacy and policy issues | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.2. Support the training of CSOs in research skills. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.4. Support the training of CSOs in monitoring and evaluation. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.5 Support training in rights based issues such as HIV/AIDS, gender, human rights and child protection. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.6. Support training on the decentralization process. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1.7. Support sensitization on EFA. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.1.Support initiated policy review meetings with policy makers, Donors, Parliamentary Committee and Private sector | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.2. Support CSOs to participate in strategy and policy formulation i.e. Plans development, budget allocation, decentralization decisions and teacher training. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.3. Support Lobby government for implementation of EFA goals e | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2.4 Support the development of advocacy skills at community level (PTA,SMC,VDC religious groups etc) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Objective 3. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.1 Support the training of CSOs on campaign tactics | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.2. Support the development of campaign tools. | | | GCE | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.3. Support CSO to carry out campaigns on education. | | | GCE | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3.4 Provide financial and technical support to CSOs to be involved in GCE activities and other education networks. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CRITERIA 2. OBJECTIVE1. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.1. Support awareness campaigns on PRSP (the education budget). | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.2. Support the development and dissemination of budget monitoring tools. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.4. Support the mobilization, formation and training of community budget monitoring structures. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.5. Support the training of community structures in the monitoring of the education budgets and expenditure. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1.6. Support the analysis, dissemination and use of monitoring data and results to all stakeholders including policy makers | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CRITERIA 3. OBJECTIVE1. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.1. Support CSOs to conduct relevant research on issues affecting quality education. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1.2. Support the dissemination of research findings and use in education policy programming. | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| 3.1.3. Support CSOs to assess the impact of the newly decentralization system in the education sector and advocate for improvement and reforms. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OBJECTIVE 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2.1. Support CSOs to set up an effective education information and communication system | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2.2. Support CSOs to facilitate local and national debates, press conferences and press releases. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2.3. Support media (radio, TV and newspaper) documentaries on key education issues. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2.4. Support the introduction of a local newsletter. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OBJECTIVE 3. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.1. Support CSOs in their collaborative efforts with the Ministry of education to strengthen counseling services . | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.2. Support CSOs to sensitize teachers and parents to remove harmful traditional attitude as regards to career choices of girls. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.3. Support CSOs on innovative programs for girls and children with disabilities to access quality education. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.4. Support CSOs to influence government to carry out necessary policy reforms including suitable infrastructure, curriculum reform, and incentives for girls and other disadvantaged children. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3.5. Support programs that promote life skills training. | | | | | | | | | | | |