

# MALAWI

## Child Rights Convention Sensitization and Enhancement of its Implementation in Malawian Primary Schools: A Case of Chimutu Primary School, Lilongwe.

*Martha Ndeyana Kwengwere, Derex Francis Edwin Souza and Leonard Sakala Banda*

### **1 Frame of Reference**

Child rights issues in Malawi are derived from various legislations thus national, international and global sources. Internationally, Malawi ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991. Further, Malawi is party to other international legislations such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) under Article 10, 12 (2) (a) and 13, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) under Article 14(4) and 24 and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (APCHPR). Globally, Malawi is guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 25(2). In addition, Malawi is currently guided by the Child (Care, Protection and Justice) Act that renews and improves the country's laws on the protection and rights of the country's children. The Act seeks to modernize the law relating to children by incorporating provisions aimed at protecting and upholding the best interest of the child, and also, to modernize the child justice system in Malawi by emphasizing on rehabilitation of child offenders and their reintegration into society. The Act is built on the provisions of the Affiliation Act and also the provisions contained in Part III of the Children and Young Persons Act and introducing new provisions covering matters such as duties and responsibilities of parents towards their children; determination of children in need of care and protection; guardianship; fosterage; residential placements; powers and procedure of child justice courts in care and protection matters; duties and functions of local authorities relating to child care and protection; and protection of children from undesirable practices.

Child Rights Convention and all other legislations in support of Child Rights revolve around issues of Provision, Protection and Participation relating to child rights. Provision involves issues such as food, healthcare, education and social security. Protection derives issues of maltreatment, neglect of all forms and exploitation. Participation, on the other hand, involves issues of the right to be active and involved in decision making.

### **1.1 Participation as a Principle of Focus**

The Change Work for Batch 13 focuses on strengthening the level of participation on the part of the child learner. Participation, herein, is where children take part in and influence processes, decisions, and activities that affect them, in order to achieve greater respect for their rights. Looking at this definition, it is noted that participation of children in Malawi is practiced at a minimal level. There are many benefits of child participation. First, it gives children an opportunity to be heard in all matters affecting them. This right encompasses aspects of participation in school, in the community, in the family, and at the national level. Our concentration rather has been in the school setting.

Additionally, participation would not suffice only to listen to children. Their views have to be taken seriously. In other words, children's views have to inform decisions that are made in the school setting. Further, these views have to be considered despite their age and maturity. The different social context and constructions the child has come into contact with affects their understanding of issues that affect them. There are many issues where even small children can participate in and contribute thoughtfully. To foster such rights, the adults have to create the opportunities for children to do so. This could be very ideal in a school setting where teachers and all stakeholders have to work towards providing such an environment.

It has been our conviction that participation promotes the well-being and development of children. Children are able to build competences, confidence, develop skills and talents. It also encourages children to make better decisions about their future. Further, some children also have passion to take interest in issues surrounding their environments. This gives them an opportunity to develop new skills, build self esteem and empowers them to handle abuses and neglect of their rights.

The team focused much on participation at the school because although there were several committees at the school in question, i.e. Advisory Committee, Disciplinary Committee, Examination Committee Sanitation Committee, Sports Committee, Punctuality and Assembly Committee, Entertainment Committee, Time Table Committee and Condolence Committee, it was observed and confirmed that learners do not take part in the activities of the mentioned respective committees, other than school clubs only. It was felt that most of these committees directly, affect the child in one way or the other, hence the need for their representation. The different clubs where the learners are much involved are also organized and headed by teach-

ers, who in turn make decisions which are passed on to the learners. The Team's search for more information, it was learnt that only the Sanitation Committee has learners involved but the names of the learners in the committee do not appear on the list of the committee members. This casts some doubts as to whether the learners are indeed represented.

Article 12 of the CRC entitles children to play an active role in issues and decisions that affect their lives. In essence the article enforces the right to challenge abuses, ensure that their rights are not neglected and take action to promote and protect those rights. It also facilitates children's contribution towards the promotion of their own best interest. In addition, article 13 of the CRC states the right to freedom of expression. Children regardless of their age, sex or physical challenges have a right to express freely their views on issues that affect them. Therefore, participation at all levels acts as a tool of ensuring that this is achieved. Furthermore, article 14 of the CRC reiterates the right to freedom of thought. This gives children an opportunity to think for themselves on issues that are in their best interest. However, these rights cannot be exercised without some control or guidance from the adults. In fact, these articles do not give the child the right to control over all decisions affecting them, thus, irrespective of levels of competencies and understanding. The articles nonetheless, introduce a radical and profound challenge to traditional attitudes. These attitudes usually, assume that children should only be seen and not heard.

It is therefore more imperative that the child participate in decision making, more especially on issues that involve them as human beings and also that could affect their education. This is likely to create a conducive environment for the learners and likely to have positive impact on the education system as a whole.

### **1.2 Target Area**

The Change Work is implemented at Chimutu Primary School. This school is located in Lilongwe Urban, along M1 road. This school being located at a central point in the city it is presumed to be part of harbingers in the wind of democratic change which started, mainly in the main cities in the country. The people residing in the vicinity of the school are working/business class people. Being an urban school, the people surrounding the school are presumed "civilized" and easily grasp concepts. This includes issues of human rights and child rights in particular.

It has been presumed as well that the teachers themselves being in such an urban setting their understanding of issues and aspects of change are advanced. It was, nonetheless, imperative for the Change Work team to presume that innovativeness should be at the centre of teaching and learning at this school given the above factors. This information suffices to say that literacy levels of the community around are high and that understanding of issues and concepts should be advanced. Hence our choice for Chimutu Primary School was based on such presumptions.

Enrolment at the school is around 900 pupils and dropout rate is very minimal. There are only four (4) prefects namely Head boy/girl and their deputies from standard 7 and 8 classes. This means the representation is scanty and not fair enough. It is obvious that views of those in the lower classes are not wholly taken on board considering lack of the representation thereof.

### 1.3 Target Group

This Change Work revolves around the learners of Chimutu Primary School. The learners need to realise they have the rights and these right have to be known and enjoyed. It may not be as simple for them to understand any of the rights, but their involvement in activities of the school would be a milestone to achieving the spirit of the CRC knowingly and or unknowingly.

There are a number of stakeholders involved. The District Education Manager and the Primary Education Advisor, who are the authorities, are much more involved in the project. Other stakeholders include the Head teachers, Teachers, Parents, School Management Committee and Parents and Teachers Association as well as Traditional Leaders.



Typical of a classroom at Chimutu School

The authorities are being involved almost at each activity of the change work in order for them to appreciate the importance of the change work and to provide moral and material support for the success of the Change Work.

The Ministry of Education being an umbrella for all stakeholders in the education sector is our major stakeholder. Thus, are obliged to provide all and exclusive environment for the realization of the rights in question. These people and duty bearers are involved at all levels where necessary.

## 2 Purpose

This Change Work is implemented to *promote inclusive decision making in the schools as a basic tenet of the Child Rights Convention*. The achievement of this objective rests on the understanding and acceptance of the concept “child participation” by all the stakeholders involved in the education system responsible for primary education.

The project is ensuring that learners take part in the activities of the school by being members of different committees available at the school, more especially those that directly affect them. On a different note the project ensures that representation in decision making portfolios is fair since members of the committees will come from almost all the classes and that the student council is fairly represented by almost all classes.

The project is also aiming at changing attitude of the teachers/elders on the perceptions of Child Rights. This helps the involved stakeholders as well as the target group itself to appreciate the importance of having and upholding child rights.

Significantly, implementation of the child rights has to be genuine. From the look of things and from the information gathered it is usually claimed that rights of the child are respected and provided for in schools. Nonetheless several aspects are left out that impinge on the rights of the child. It is only when learners participate fully in the activities of the school, that their rights are realised. This also entails genuine participation of the child in decision making on issues affecting them. Obviously, it does not mean that whatever children say must be complied with. Rather, proper consideration should be given on any of such views when decisions are made about and for the child.

The project would like to uphold democratic values and tendencies amongst the learners e.g. voting, and freedom of speech. Malawi being a representative democracy, the learner needs to learn and understand its practice while in school so that this learner also appreciates the broader political life they are to be part of eventually.

## 3 Methodology

The Project started in January 2011. The team met the District Education Manager for Lilongwe Urban as Chimutu School falls under their jurisdiction. This was a physical visit, for a brief meeting followed by formal communication by a letter which was responded to, and the Head Teachers of Chimutu L.E.A School were recipients. This letter was the authority to proceed with the project. The team also met the Head Teacher and this was through a formal meeting. Bookings and appointments were made with each group that has been engaged so far.

Meeting with learners was through focus groups of set number of learner representatives from the classes. Differently, we also engaged them through the representatives of the classes as elected by the learners themselves. These class representatives put office bearers into different portfolios as guided by the committees in the school where learners are directly involved and need their input in terms of decisions.

Most of the work was done by the team save for some specific task such as letter writing, which was assigned to individuals in the team.

After the follow up seminar in Hohhot, China, a wider number of stakeholders were approached for their input and assistance. The team engaged the DEM more vigorously and other stakeholders within the education sector such as the Primary education Advisor (PEA). The team also engaged the department of Child Right at Malawi Human Right Commission. The encounter assisted our project in mainstreaming child rights in the classroom.

The Mentor's visit also created the trust amongst our stakeholders on the implementing team than before. A number of teachers appreciated the idea and came forth to join hands in implementing the work. The visit by our mentor guided the team's operating principles such as meeting individual teacher with a like mind, and interest in the project. This helped to have a number of teachers who stood for us every time an activity was planned and implemented.

In all the activities we tried to be more participatory for the learners and teachers to appreciate the concept 'participation'.



Project team, Martha, far left and Derex, far right with mentor, Ulf and Head Teacher for Chimutu Primary School

### 3.1 Activities

A number of activities have been implemented in the life span of the project as outlined below.

#### **(a) Lobbying with relevant stakeholders to gain understanding and acceptance of child rights issues and change work**

A number of stakeholders have been approached so far in the period and lifespan of the Change Work. The DEM, PEA, teachers, Head Teachers, the Ministry of Education (The Secretary of Education), the School Committee, the Malawi Human Rights Commission, were lobbied at different times as the need arose. This made our work to have a backbone and mandate in the school.

#### **(b) To conduct Survey (qualitative) on knowledge and understanding of Child Rights Convention to relevant stakeholders and target group (i.e. teachers, traditional leaders, parents/ teachers association and learners respectively)**

Our survey started by our visits where we observed a number of things some of which include the young learners urinating outside classes; the committee members posted on the walls of the staff room where we noticed that no name of learners appeared and this informed the Project Team's opportunity for intervention. Meeting with the learners was yet another forum where information was solicited from them on what they know about child rights. It was more of a focus group discussion. In the first group we had 30 learners from classes 5 to 7. These comprised 16 male learners and 14 female learners. Their ages ranged from 8 to 16. Learners from class 8 were exempted to the discussions because this time they were writing mock examinations in preparation for the national examinations. But we managed to have the Head Girl and Head Boy.

The team asked the learners if they knew their rights. In this case they all said that they knew as they explained that it is part of the curriculum. We then introduced the stick it up exercise whereby each learner was supposed to write one right they know and stick the paper on a board. Learners were free to write it using either in vernacular and or English. Reading from the stickers, most learners wrote of the right to education. Therefore, this prompted the team members to conclude that most of the learners knew of their right to education, among the other rights available in the CRC. Perhaps this is well known because it is mentioned and emphasized by teachers or parents. Our team then wanted to know if the knowledge that the learners have of child rights is used. While asking them of their involvement in school activities, like how are they involved in the different committees at the school, it was observed that not much involvement is done especially on the part of decision making. Despite having different committees at the school, they are not involved much other than being on the receiving end. The prefects are informed of decisions to communicate to the learners. It was also discovered that the prefects do not have outlined terms of reference. All they do is to make sure that fellow learners are early to school and classes from home and from break respectively; and making sure those learners have tacked in their shirts. **Appendix 1** shows a list of questions asked to Standard 5-7 learners and their answers.

The same methodology was applied on the young learners from classes 1 to 4. In this group there were about 68 participants. Standard 1 learners were **21** comprising 11 male learners and 10 female learners. Standard 2 learners were **21** comprising of 9 male learners and 12 female learners. Standard 3 learners were **23** comprising 14 male learners and 9 female learners. Standard 4 learners were **19** comprising 9 male learners and 10 female learners. Their ages ranged from 6 to 16 years. We chose this number for we felt that this is the very age group that requires more care when issues to do with rights are concerned. A wider basis for information gathering would mean getting the right perspective on rights issues at the school. **Appendix 2** shows list of questions and answers for Standard 1-4 learners.<sup>1</sup>

While soliciting information, from the two groups, to base the project on and the eventual roll out, the Project Team found this as an opportunity to give some more information on child rights. This was to equip the learners with more information

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Most of the activities implemented and the methodologies are presented in DVDs submitted to our Mentor and Lund University.



on the topic of child rights. Despite the fact that they have a topic on Child Rights in the curriculum – Social Studies, there are problems of really understanding what such rights are and what they entail.

**(c) Briefing teachers on Child Rights issues**

At Chimutu Primary School there are more lady teachers as opposed to male teachers. This is the case because most of the teachers are spouses of men that work or do business in town. Hence most of the women teachers follow spouses to town. Of the 21 teachers at the school there only two male teachers and when we met the teachers there were only two male teachers out of 17. Our encounter with teachers before and after our follow up seminar in China, unearthed a number of issues especially on participation of the learners in decision making. Generally, teachers have not been forthcoming to giving the learner child a meaningful chance to participate fully in decision making though policies in the education sector emphasize on this aspect as a tool for effective teaching and learning.

Our discussions, the mentor’s visit and the visit by Batch 14 invigorated the enthusiasm and zeal in some teachers to discuss more on child rights and participation in particular.

**(d) Sensitize learners on Child Rights Convention through debates, drama and informative sessions**

This activity started with sensitizing of more information on child rights as a starting point to trying to finding the gaps in the knowledge on child rights. A student council has been put in place and it is functional. In addition a child rights club is introduced. These groups are responsible with running all issues to do with child rights and participation of the learners at all levels in the school.

**(e) Hold meetings with Parents and Teachers Association and School Committee**

A meeting was held and it was successful and it bore fruits, as parents accepted the change work for the good of their children. The School Committee Chairperson welcomed the whole concept and promised to monitor progress and the eventual fruits it shall bring forth in the school.

**(f) Electing School Prefects**

The prefects were elected amongst class representatives. The team facilitated the process. These prefects were engaged on a number of occasions to put in place terms of reference for their portfolios and a number of sessions on making them understand their work and human rights in general and child rights in particular. In the same vein a number of fliers were put in classroom bearing child right messages for the learners to see, read and appreciate. Most of the



messages carried along pictures that appealed to the learners to appreciate a particular right. Annex 3 gives detail of the elected prefects and terms of references as decided by the learners and teachers.

#### **(g) Capacity Building for the Prefects**

The prefects were also sensitized on child rights. A separate session was planned and implemented on how they are supposed to operate in as prefects. It was discussed that there should be constant communication between the learners and teachers and vice versa.

### **4 Results**

During the implementation of the change work there have been a number of pointers on the work done that show that there has been progress and in the right direction.

#### **4.1 Indicators for Output and Outcome:**

The Change Agents sensitized teachers and learners as well as School Management Committee on child rights and importance of the change work that is being implemented at Chimutu Primary School. Knowledge on child rights has been raised as most of the learners only knew of right to education.

The teachers now show interest to embrace the project, and they are very willing and eager to see this project achieve its objective. Despite the resistance which comes with any change, the teachers asked the team to introduce the change on child participation.

Further, the school authorities have been cooperative enough by fulfilling appointments and organizing the learners for the meetings. And the Project Team is sure that this will continue with subsequent activities with Change Agents now and others coming in the Training Programme continuing on this change work and other stakeholders like the Human Rights Commission who has shown interest in the change work.

#### **4.2 Output**

In the short-term, knowledge has been imparted on learners as well as teachers on child rights. The teachers are now able to be articulate on the reason we have to implement child participation in schools. The teachers are eager to see how this is working. They have offered to assist the team in making sure that the committees instituted are working as per the terms of references made by the learners and agreed by the school management. Here, it is imperative to mention that after gaining the knowledge and appreciating the need for learners to be part and parcel of decision making, the teachers have accepted and implementing the change. This means that

knowledge on child rights has been acquired which is important as this will lead to smooth implementation of all other child rights activities at the school.

Secondly, there has been an initial attitude change from the teachers. Where the teachers had reservations, they paved way to try the new aspect and prove its effectiveness. This is very positive on the part of the change work, as it informs an articulate way of implementing the activities for the success of the project. Another example of the attitude change was notable during the discussions with the teachers whereby one teacher said as quoted,

*“Things have changed and they will keep on changing e.g. we have a new curriculum which we are following that requires us to teach the learners in groups and where applicable in Chichewa. It is, therefore, pertinent that we be guided on what may be done. We should not resist change.”*

Of course not all teachers are very comfortable with learners having more knowledge and exercising on their rights. Hence, some resistance to accept the change work as some teachers feel that such a project will make the children know more of their rights, hence, compromise the teaching and learning. If learners have more knowledge they are bound to be cunning when it comes to obeying teachers and authority. As a team we have assured the teachers that we will very much emphasize equally on the responsibilities of each right. Looking at this angle, all learners will have both knowledge on their rights and the exercise of responsibilities which are crucial to defuse the fears by the teachers.

The team is grateful nonetheless that there has finally been acceptance of the project from the authorities who are also our stakeholders. This has also made them give and perhaps continue giving necessary guidance on how to tread on with the project.

### **4.3 Outcome of the Change Work**

The Change Work Team is gradually increasing participation amongst learners and with teachers in the school. As the different committees are represented by learners and teachers there should be a culture of consultation between the two sides. Participation at this level becomes more natural and practical. Teaching and learning becomes enjoyable and very effective.

There is also a feeling that the elections that are held for the student council will be continuous each academic year and be more representative, thus upholding democratic values within the school system and at the same time imparting knowledge on how the country's democracy works.

#### **4.4 Expected Results**

The Project Team expects to help build a conducive learning environment at Chimutu Primary School for the learners where all rights are respected, provided for, and are enjoyed to the fullest.

The Project Team also expects that learners' views are always respected by the teachers since most of the decisions made in the school affect the child. Their involvement in decision making shall enhance the enjoyment of the rights in question. In addition, this would promote ownership among the learners of the changes being made arising from the decisions made cohesively.

#### **4.5 Unexpected Results**

There has been an aspect of some resistance to change from the teachers who feel a child need not have more and in-depth knowledge on their rights. There has been fear of the unknown and territorial protection; hence, the resistance as the project progressed. As a team there is need to make the project a teacher responsibility. The team will involve the teachers as much as possible for them to have ownership of the change activities that will be taking place at the school. The Project Team feels that owning the project will be a vital point to do away with the resistance. The team will increase the participation of teachers in making decisions about various aspects of the process. The more common reason is to increase teachers' commitment to the resultant outcomes, as they will feel a greater stake or sense of ownership in what is decided and achieved.

It is also expected that some learners may violate rights of others or even break some school rules. Though each right comes with responsibilities, some learners may wish to overstep their exercise of their rights that will eventually violate rights of others. Despite the teachers being responsible for creating a better environment for the enjoyment of any of such rights, the learners too have to be cautious not to infringe on other learners and teachers' rights or even to use this as a means of breaking school rules and regulations.

### **5 Discussions and Reflection**

The results of the project are on the right track. All grey areas concerning child rights have been identified, and have been cleared during the different activities with the teachers as well with learners and the stakeholders involved.

As a team we have been able to learn the extent of knowledge of child rights issues among the learners and their teachers even in town where presumptions are that the people are knowledgeable of such issues. The team has been able to learn attitudes of some teachers as far as child rights issues are concerned. Meeting different people and in different environments on the project has made us appreciate the different

traits and characters of the participants, and stakeholders. This has also informed our approaches in the subsequent activities.

More so, we have learnt to appreciate and respect individual capabilities and contributions to the project. Our weaknesses were surmounted since we worked as a team. Individually we have learnt to respect each one others capabilities and reliance on our colleagues. Delegation played a vital role as well. Our strength also rested on timely and effective communication on all issue to do with the change work.

Despite the positive results outlined herein, we have had a number of challenges in the implementation of the change work. Some of the challenges are as outlined -

- (a) **Time constraints** – combining professional work and the project had been a tall order. While fulfilling our obligations in our work places, the project suffered somehow. Some of the team members would go into the field for quiet a longer period, hence the project would stall for such periods as most of the activities require the presence of all or at least two members. To enhance timely implementation of the project, definite timelines for each activity had to be drawn and adhered to by the responsible party.
- (b) **Financial constraints** – we required some resources that required finances. It has been difficult to give definite remedies for this problem due to a trend in organizations' chase for patronage. The allowance syndrome has been a major block to development. Nevertheless, we feel making the parties and stakeholders involved own the change work as the best solution to the problem.
- (c) **Conflict of interest within the workplace** - our supervisors had given us a go ahead to implement the project but sometimes they were reluctant to release us for the project. This had a negative bearing on the running of the project. The team members need to have clear plans in the offices and presented to officers and or supervisors on the days and times they plan to be involved in the project whether individually as well as a team.
- (d) **Resistance amongst teachers** – there has been some resistance amongst the teachers. This aspect strained the team's mental capacities to convince them on the necessity of the project and why Chimutu Primary School had been chosen. Overcoming this challenge had been by making the project their own and implement the activities with much cautious as not to rub shoulders with the teachers. Involving the teachers at every point gives credibility and all misconceptions about child rights are eliminated. . Essentially, defeating resistance was by:-
  - (a) giving the teachers a clear picture of the objectives to be achieved;

- (b) explaining how the teachers themselves would be beneficial to the school in general, to the learners and to the individual teachers;
  - (c) discussing participation of learners in details by explaining its benefits and also expelling all myths and misconceptions about it;
  - (d) establishing individual relationships with the teachers who showed some interest in the project rather than dealing with a group at all times. This helped in that such teachers were able to influence the other teachers who were less willing.
  - (e) being confident in facilitating the activities were carried out their exercises. This helped the team to instil interest and willingness in some teachers to work together with the change agents;
  - (f) presenting a well laid action plan and explained to the Head teacher and the teachers and followed accordingly;
  - (g) ensuring that some teachers were present at each activity that took place. This helped them to own it and to ensure that the learners were not being misled considering the culture that Malawi embraces.
- (e) **Misconception** – many stakeholders have misconception that perhaps the change work is funded and hence has a lot of monies. Their expectation is beyond the realm of the project. Nonetheless, they have participated in our activities with the conviction that it is a project accepted by the higher authorities. It's our assumption that the interest in the project continues. Proper communication is vital here. The stakeholders have to be told the resources that are available for the project in the beginning. And being a change project and it being continuous, they have to know that the project remains in their charge while it trickles to other areas and schools. This makes them understand the importance of working voluntarily for the good of their own children and learners.

From the above explanations, though a few problems highlighted, the Change Work Team can boast of success, thus positive acceptance of our project and increased knowledge amongst the learners and teachers as well as the participation thereof in the school activities.

## 6 Way Forward

As a team we are going to be part and parcel of the whole change as we endeavour to support the learners in their quest to understand and implement their own bid to the enjoyment of their rights to the fullest.

There is need, nonetheless, to plan and organize a seminar for teachers and Parents and Teachers Association on human rights but with much emphasis on child rights.

This activity will be assisted by the Department of Child Rights in the Malawi Human Rights Commission. The workshop will also involve other Change Agents in the Malawi Network.

Sustainability of the change work rests on involving all stakeholders such as the District Education Manager, Primary Education Advisor, Malawi Human Rights Commission, Head teachers and some relatively young teachers as much as possible in all activities that take place. Another crucial aspect is to train the teachers in child rights issues and developing and sharing guidelines and materials on child rights with the school. Imperatively, to engage discussions with the District Education Manager to identify the Head teachers or teachers with special skills to carry on with the project for sustainability and asking them to take up one lesson class by class on the rights of the child.

## **7 Conclusion**

The project has been worthwhile. It is hoped that skills and knowledge gained by the Project Team will not go in vain, let alone the funding by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The Malawi Team is very much willing to ensure that this project is implemented not only at Chimutu School, but in all the Malawian Primary Schools.





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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### List of questions and answers for Standard 5-7 learners

**Q. Have you ever learnt about child rights at this school?**

*A. Yes, we learn child rights in Standard 7only.*

**Q. Have you ever listened to radio programmes on rights, duties and responsibilities?**

*A. Yes*

**Q. Some of you are class monitors, head boys or head girls. Do the duties that you perform correspond with the expectations you had?**

*A. Our expectations were similar to our role in ensuring that classrooms and the surroundings are tidy and enforcing discipline among the learners.*

**Q. Are the learners satisfied with the manner this role (of head boy/girl) is discharged?**

*A. At times learners undermine teachers. Class monitors, head boys and head girls ensure that learners are obedient and do cleaning work, which portrays good image of the school.*

*A. Some learners look at our class leaders as a bother. However, the majority appreciate that the role our class leaders play promotes favourable learning environment.*

*A. Class leaders/headboy/girl do commendable job such as instilling in us the spirit to learn cleaning work. We are able to show our parents the fruits of our class leaders' efforts in disciplining us.*

**Q. It has been noted that the school has several committees e.g. sports, condolence and environment committees. Do the head boys/girls take part in**

these committees? (This question was put forward to the teachers present during the meeting).

A. *There are some committees in which learners take part, but not all of them.*

**Q. Can you define a child?**

A. *A child is a person whose reasoning capacity has not fully grown and developed due to childhood.*

A. *A child is a person who is too young to fend for him/herself due to childhood.*

A. *A child is a person who should be taught and guided up to when he/she will become an adult.*

A. *A child is a person who cannot live an independent life, but depends on parents.*

A. *A child is a person who is not mature in reasoning.*

## Appendix 2

### List of questions and answers for Standard 1-4 learners

**Q. Have you ever heard about human rights?**

A. *Yes*

**I want each one of you to tell me what you know about human rights.**

A. *Right to education, right to work, right to read, right to education, right to play with friends, right to education, right to play, right to love parents, right to respect a teacher, right to education, right to education, right to be protected, right to tertiary education and right to read.*

**Q. Where did you learn about these rights?**

A. *We were briefed by our parents.*

A. *We read about human rights.*

**Q. From which books?**

A. *Social Studies Books.*

**Q. Who is a child?**

A. *A child is an infant.*

A. *A child is a baby.*

### Appendix 3

Table showing elected prefects in the school and the developed terms of references

Serial No.	Committee Prefects	Sex	Class
1	Sports Prefect	Female	8
	Deputy	Male	8
2	Condolence Prefect	Male	8
	Deputy	Female	8
3	Environment/ Sanitation Prefect	Male	8
	Deputy	Female	7
4	Entertainment Prefect	Female	8
	Deputy	Male	7
5	Examination Prefect	Male	5
	Deputy	Female	7
6	Overall Prefects for Clubs	Female	7
	Deputy	Male	6
7	Human Rights Prefect	Female	7
	Deputy	Male	8

The Terms of References for the Prefects in the Committees

#### **Sports Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Look after the school teams.
- (b) Choose venue for sports and ensure that teams are meeting on agreed days and time.
- (c) Encourage learners to participate in sporting activities.
- (d) Ensure that the sporting field are available and in good shape.
- (e) Ensure that sports kit and accessories are available.
- (f) Ensure that there are equal opportunities for both girls and boys.

#### **Condolence Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Give hope and faith to the sick.
- (b) Organize something for the needy.

- (c) Organize other learners and teachers to represent the school when one is bereaved.
- (d) Visit sick learners and teachers.
- (e) Assist teachers collect money for condolence.
- (f) Inform the school about funerals should there be any.

#### **Environment/Sanitation Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Ensure that the school surroundings are clean.
- (b) Ensure that there are waste bins at the school.
- (c) Ensure that the toilets are clean.
- (d) Ensure school uniforms for learners are in good condition.
- (e) Ensure that boys tuck in their shirts and hairs are combed for all learners.
- (f) Ensure that learners are punctual to work on the school surroundings.

#### **Entertainment Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Encourage learners to participate in some activities such as drama, poetry etc. instead of practicing bad behaviour.
- (b) Liaise with the responsible teacher about the venue for entertainment.
- (c) Not be shy.
- (d) Organize fundraising activities to give the less privileged learners.
- (e) Ensure that there are costumes and equipment for the activity being undertaken.
- (f) Ensure that learners participate in entertainment activities.

#### **Examination Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Ensure that every learner has paid examination fees and has written the exams.
- (b) Ensure that the organization which is entrusted with printing of examination papers is trustworthy and reliable.
- (c) Ensure that every learner is in the right class.
- (d) Ensure close liaison with the teachers in every aspect.
- (e) Ensure that the examination calendar is known to all learners and in good time.
- (f) Discourage cheating in examination.

#### **Overall for Clubs**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Ensure that there are information materials at the school of activities taking place at the school.
- (b) Ensure that learners join and participate in different clubs available at the school.
- (c) Ensure that clubs are carrying out the tasks required of them.
- (d) Ensure teachers attendance at the clubs.
- (e) Ensure that clubs are meeting on agreed days and times.

### **Human Rights Committee**

The Prefects should:

- (a) Ensure that everyone is treated equally.
- (b) Ensure that the human rights principles are followed.
- (c) Ensure that members are meeting as agreed.
- (d) Educate others on child rights and responsibilities.
- (e) Liaise with human rights organizations to education the school on issues of human rights and provision of information materials on child rights.

## Dedications

Batch 13, Malawi Team is dedicating this report to the Child Learner who has no chance to contribute on decisions made for and about her/him. This Learner cannot take part in decision making, **not because is incapable but rather, society has constructed that this child should only be seen and not heard.**

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