

Programme Evaluation Report

Edukans Quality Education Programme

A world map with a light gray background. Several countries are highlighted in a solid orange color: Nigeria in West Africa, Kenya in East Africa, and India in South Asia. The text 'The Star School Programme 2017-2019' is overlaid on the map in a large, black, sans-serif font.

The Star School Programme 2017-2019

Report Submitted to
Edukans Foundation, The Netherlands

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATL	Active Teaching and Learning
BEQUIP	Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSE	Comprehensive Sexual Education
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEC	Development Expertise Centre, Ethiopia
DEM	District Education Managers
EEDF	Education Expertise Development Foundation Malawi
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HIV/AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome/ Human Immunodeficiency Virus
KII	Key Informant Interviews
MOE	Ministry of Education
MWML	My World My Life Clubs
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
RAG Scale	Red, Amber, Green (The Traffic Lights) Scale
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLSSH	Student Led School Sanitation and Hygiene Clubs
SMC	School Management Committee
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
TTC	Teacher Training College
TUM	Teachers Union of Malawi
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1.0 THE PROGRAMME AND EVALUATION CONTEXT

1.1 THE EDUCATION CONTEXT

The quest to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is *to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. The vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. The focus is therefore on access, equity and inclusion, quality and learning outcomes, within a lifelong learning approach. Many countries face the momentous challenge of providing conditions where genuine learning can take place. Edukans Star School Programme was started in 2016 and ended in 2019, having been implemented in India, Kenya, Ghana Malawi and Ethiopia.

In **India** an estimated 8.1 million children are out of school, majority of those belonging to the disadvantaged groups. Dropout rates are high. Wide gender disparities exist in education. For every 100 boys enrolled in secondary education, there are 81 girls enrolled. Significant challenges still remain to keep schools safe considering rising civil unrest and the wide prevalence of corporal punishment across the country.¹

In **Kenya** more than 1.2 million primary-school-age children do not attend school. The hardest to reach include children with disabilities, children living in pastoral and nomadic communities and in urban informal settlements. Although Kenya has made tremendous progress towards increasing access to education, there are still issues of inequity among marginalized groups².

In **Ghana**, despite progress made in improving access to education for all, the school environment is not conducive to learning; classes are overcrowded, water and sanitation facilities are inadequate and trained teachers and school books are in short supply. Although Ghana has been successful at closing the gender gap when it comes to completing school at primary education level, it is still high at secondary level³.

The Programme Evaluation of the Edukans Star Education Programme sampled two countries, Malawi and Ethiopia. Providing quality education remains a challenge in these two countries.

In **Malawi** access to quality, basic education has numerous barriers; these include infrastructure-related factors, such as physical access to the learning environment and long distances from school to home, as well as social factors, including persistent discrimination of vulnerable populations in school (girls, children with disabilities, orphans, HIV/Aids affected/infected children), limited family income, child labour, and prevalence of violence and insecurity in schools. Schools lack a safe drinking water source and hygiene facilities; gender-based violence in and on the way to and from school, lack of learning materials, teachers are scarce and unequally distributed, as well as a large teacher to student ratio, high repetition and dropout rates; low levels of completion and progression to secondary school. These challenges affect the education system and prevents children, especially girls, from completing their education and reaching their full potential.

Ethiopia has made remarkable progress in education, with primary school enrolment tripling between 2000 and 2017; the complex and providing quality education is challenging due many factors, including the low quality of education negatively affects children's ability to achieve learning goals. Secondly, pastoralists constitute a large proportion of the population, at 12 to 15 million people. Bringing education to pastoralists is challenging due to poor rural infrastructure and cultural livelihood patterns that make 'stable' education difficult for communities who travel on seasonal migration patterns. In addition, girls face several challenges, where gender-based violence, early child marriage and other harmful social norms are barriers for girls' participation in primary and secondary education.

¹ <https://unicef.in/Story/1122/Education>

² <https://www.unicef.org/kenya/quality-education>

³ <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/education>

1.2 THE EDUKANS STAR SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

The current Star School Programme was started in 2016 and ended in 2019, having been implemented in several countries: India, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and Ethiopia.

The programme goal is “*Sustainable livelihoods and active citizenship through development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of marginalized children and youth*”. This vision would be achieved through the pursuing the following Long Term Outcomes;

- Students demonstrate positive social behaviour;
- Improved learning outcomes for all the children through safe and effective schools (STAR school compliant);
- Improved education system by effective partnerships between government and civil society organisations.

Planned Targets

- 1.5 million students with better learning outcomes;
- 2.000 schools deliver quality education;
- 30.000 teachers using active teaching and learning methods.

The Long-term outcomes would be achieved through the consistent realisation of the following short-term outcome:

- Teachers effectively apply social and emotional learning and/or comprehensive sexuality education in their classrooms;
- Enhanced school safety;
- Teachers effectively apply active teaching and learning in their classrooms;
- School leaders effectively apply leadership and management skills;
- Schools monitored by strong parent community groups like PTA's and SMC's, community groups enforce laws and regulations;
- Government and educational authorities effectively support schools.

To achieve the above outcomes, Edukans developed **EDUstars**, a comprehensive, hands on school quality model that helps schools develop a high-level learning environment for their students. This model aims at improving the quality of education by analysing and improving the five dimensions that determine quality education:

- Safe learning environment (STARenvironment);
- Comprehensive child approach; improved academic, social and emotional learning (STARlearner);
- Well-trained and motivated teachers (STARteacher);
- Well-functioning school management (STARleader);
- Supportive, involved parents and community (STARcommunity).

Edukans maps schools along these five pillars involving all stakeholders, they assess the quality of schools on the five dimensions of quality education above. The EDUstars Quality Card tool is then used to assess the quality of education and monitor quality developments. A joint school improvement plan to monitor progress. A school that shows high scores on all pillars is therefore considered a high quality school that is able to offer a high-level learning environment for its students.

The Edukans model seeks to improve the quality of education leading to higher academic results, better retention and transition to follow up education. It is expected that students become more cooperative and confident about their abilities, with critical thinking skills. This is to be pursued through interventions that promote the 5 dimensions of the EDUstars approach (safe schools, strong leadership, effective child-centred teaching, strong school monitoring (SMC and PTA), community enforced laws and regulations and effective government support and monitoring). This evaluation seeks to measure the extent to which these short term outcomes have been achieved, and in so doing extrapolate the extent to which the long-term outcomes may have been achieved. Based on the results of the long-term outcomes, an inference can be drawn on how the long term outcomes are contributing to the desired impact. This evaluation was conducted in two countries, Ethiopia and Malawi.

1.3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1.3.1 Evaluation Context

The evaluation of the Star School Programme was commissioned by Edukans Netherlands to achieve the following:

- Identify the effect of the Quality Education School Programme on the quality and of education in the countries under review;
- Building evidence base and establishing a track record for Edukans to use for fundraising;
- Gather lessons learned and best practices in order to further optimize the STAR school model approach;
- Use evaluation reports for communication purposes and positioning of Edukans as expert in education.

Objectives of the evaluation

The main objective of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the project has brought meaningful results for project beneficiaries. To what extent the proposed goals specified by the project proposals have been achieved, and identify key areas that can be replicated in similar interventions. Further, the evaluation also focussed on the relevance, sustainability and efficiency of the project.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- To examine the extent to which the project objectives (long term outcomes) have been achieved (Impact)
- To examine the extent to which the project results (short term and intermediate outcomes) have been achieved (Effectiveness)
- To examine the extent the project interventions were relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries (Relevance)
- To examine the extent to which the results achieved and the outputs obtained were in balance with the resources utilised (Efficiency)
- To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after the project ends (Sustainability)

In seeking to fulfil the above stated objectives, evaluation questions were formulated using the five OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability.

See **Annex 1: Edukans Star Programme Evaluation TOR.**

1.3.2 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was undertaken as a mixed method evaluation process, taking cognizance of the dynamism of the programme and the unique country contexts in Malawi and Ethiopia.

Table 1: EDUstars School Project Scope Ethiopia and Malawi

Country	Schools	Locations	Teachers	Learners
Ethiopia	42	Afar, Amhara, Oromia and Addis Ababa	412	67,658
Malawi	30	Mangochi, Mzimba South, Lilongwe Rural East and Chikwawa	639	80,000

The approach included desk review of secondary data and collection of primary data. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected.

Desk Work

a) Documents and Literature Review

The first stage involved collecting all relevant secondary data. These included existing programme documents, including the initial programme and/or project proposals, implementation plans, results frameworks, milestones and project reports, monitoring protocols, etc. See **Annex 2: List of Documents Review**. There was also a process of reviewing the relevant policy and legislation for the respective countries, as well as guiding policies and funding documents of the donors for the project. Trends, reports, and news on the basic education status and trends in general were also considered. The evaluation had planned to review the results of the EDUstars Quality Card, but these were not available at the time of the evaluation.

b) Stakeholder Mapping

In reviewing the programme and policy documents, the evaluation identified critical stakeholders. Those that were involved in the evaluation exercise included: Teachers, Students, Head Teachers, Government Education Officers at the District, and Parents.

c) Development of tools

Through a consultative process involving Edukans Netherlands and the country teams from both Malawi and Ethiopia, the evaluators developed tools for the evaluation, see **Annex 3: Evaluation Tools**. The tools included a survey questionnaire for the students, this was administered as a mobile based tool; an interview guide for the Head Teachers and Government officials Key Informant Interviews; and an interview guide for the parents and teachers FGDs.

d) Field Work

Quantitative data collection

The quantitative approach aimed at eliciting numerical and quantifiable data, which has been used to generate descriptive statistics. This was gathered from a randomly selected sample of the students who were from the beneficiary schools of the project. A mobile phone based questionnaire was administered by locally recruited enumerators in both countries. See **Annex 4: Mini Student Mobile Survey Report**.



Sampling Frame – A total of 24 schools were sampled, 12 in each country, 6 in each region, totalling 559 students. The students' sample was divided into 70% being those in grade 7-8 and 30% being those in grade 5-6. The ratio of boys to girls was based on the approximate ratio of boys to girls in the respective school.

In Malawi, the evaluators covered 2 regions Lilongwe and Mzimba. Each of these regions had 6 schools, so all the 12 schools were sampled for the student survey.

Table 2: EDUstars School sampled, Malawi

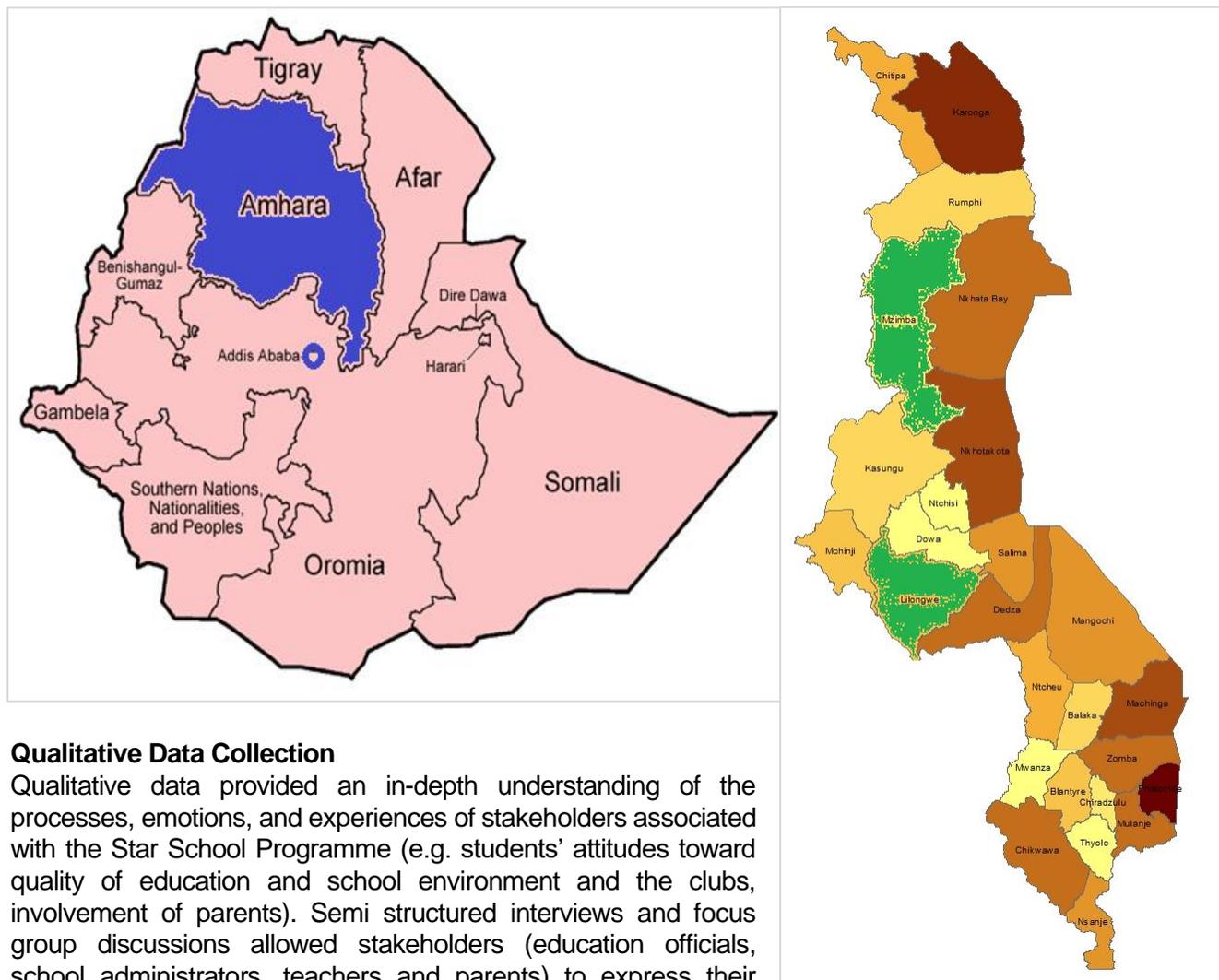
District	Primary Schools
Lilongwe Rural East	Kalumbu, Mwatibu, Sonkhwe, Mtenthera, Nkhoma and Mchuchu
Mzimba South	Itchiyeni, Mbawa, Mabiri, Thoza, Mavungwe and Chizimya

In Ethiopia, the evaluation covered 2 regions as well, Addis Ababa and Amhara. 6 schools were sampled in each region, totalling 12 schools.

Table 3: EDUstars School sampled, Ethiopia

District	Primary Schools
Addis Ababa	March 8, Bole Gerji, Bole Addis, Goro, Meles Fire and Alfa
Amhara	Robit, Gombat, Merawi Kebele, Merawi Primary, Ambo Mesk and Wotet Abay

Map 1: Malawi and Ethiopia Evaluation Sites



Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data provided an in-depth understanding of the processes, emotions, and experiences of stakeholders associated with the Star School Programme (e.g. students’ attitudes toward quality of education and school environment and the clubs, involvement of parents). Semi structured interviews and focus group discussions allowed stakeholders (education officials, school administrators, teachers and parents) to express their attitudes and perceptions also captured overall satisfaction levels. Specifically,

- **Key Informant Interviews** – Key Informant Interviews were held with the following persons; The head teachers of 18 out of 20 of the schools visited as well as the government district education officials in both Malawi and Ethiopia. In Malawi the District Education Manager for Lilongwe and in Ethiopia the Woreda Education Official for Bahir Dar in Amhara. Views were also sought from Primary Education Advisors in Malawi and Primary Cluster Supervisors in Ethiopia who were encountered in the course of the evaluation process. In total 19 KII were conducted;
- **Focus Group Discussions** – Focus Group discussions were held with teachers in all the 20 schools in both Malawi and Ethiopia. In each, session, there were an average of 5 teacher present. FGDs were also held with parents in the 10 schools in Malawi averaging 6 participants in each session and 5 schools in Ethiopia averaging 2 participants in each session. A total of 145 persons (teachers and parents (SMC and PTA members) were interviewed;
- **Classroom Observation** – In each of the 10 schools visited in Malawi, the evaluator was able to observe a classroom session. In Ethiopia, observation was undertaken in 6 out of the 10 schools visited. The sessions observed varied representing sessions in years 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

See Annex 5: List of People Interviewed.

1.3.3 Evaluation Team

The evaluation team comprised Mrs Betty Maina, a social development specialist who was the lead consultant working with Mrs Madeline Muga, a monitoring and evaluation professional and Ms. Kezia Gachoka the data curator and administrative support. In each country the evaluation team mobilised and worked with 11 enumerators recruited locally; in Malawi- 6 in Lilongwe and 5 in Mzimba and in Ethiopia- Addis Ababa 5 and Amhara 6.

1.3.4 Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation exercise was a success, with minimal hitches and so the in-country reviews in Ethiopia and Malawi took place over a four weeks period. The review process was limited in terms of access to busy stakeholders during this period, for example finding parents for the parents FGDs in Ethiopia was a challenge. It was also a busy exam period in some schools for example in Addis Ababa as they were sitting exams; the Evaluation Team was therefore not able to undertake classroom observations in these schools. Field visits were sampled in 2 out of 4 regions in Malawi and 2 out of 4 regions in Ethiopia. Due to time and resource limitations, the decision was made not to go to those regions that are extremely inaccessible such as Afar in Ethiopia and Chikwawa in Malawi. In Ethiopia, due to the vast distances, the evaluation school samples were clustered around schools within 30-40km apart. Due to the consistency of information gathered, the evaluators concluded that this decision did not in any way compromise the results obtained and the results can be considered applicable right across both countries. The limited time available for the review means that a dip-stick approach was taken at field level using qualitative research methods. The findings should be taken to be indicative, and every effort has been made to triangulate data using other available sources of information. Language was a barrier particularly in Ethiopia and translation was required for over 80% of the meetings. In Malawi, translation was required only for the parents FGDs. The flow of ideas was hampered during translation and sometimes the meaning may have been misunderstood. However great caution was taken to ask the questions in different ways to ensure that the accurate meanings were captured. Meetings where translators were used took much longer time to execute.

2.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the evaluation. The Project was analysed on the basis of the five key criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, overarching developmental impact and sustainability.

In this section, the evaluation seeks to establish if the **Star School Programme**, was relevant in identifying the problem and the solutions proposed; whether in the implementation of the programme, the set out objectives were achieved; whether the objectives achieved are commensurate with the resources used; whether the gains can be sustained into the future, and whether there is improvement in society as a result of this programme.

2.1 RELEVANCE

The Edukans Star School Programme, was found to be very relevant to the prevailing country and education context in both Malawi and Ethiopia. This project was a timely intervention and was lauded as making a great contribution to some of the most important areas of primary education in both countries. As a result, it received great support from the government and other relevant stakeholders as well as the beneficiaries.

2.1.1 Relevance of Star School Programme Strategies

a. *The Star School Approach, intervening in the five quality education domains*

The Star School Project, maintains that quality education can only take place where the following is in place:

- Safe learning environment;
- Comprehensive child approach; improved academic, social and emotional learning;
- Well-trained and motivated teachers;
- Well-functioning school management;
- Supportive, involved parents and community.

The evaluation has revealed that indeed, these 5 dimensions are fundamental for the provision of quality education, evidenced by the achievement of high educational outcomes by the students.

It was evidenced throughout the schools visited, that where teachers applied ATL methodologies and were inspired and innovative, the students have been consistently recording better learning outcomes. Pupils responding to *The Mini Students Survey* reported overall 69% of the respondents reported that their academic performance had improved in the last school term while 31% reported performance had either dropped (17%) or remained the same (14%). Girls have not been left behind, Overall 39% of female respondents in Ethiopia (22%) and Malawi (17%) reported their performance had improved. 30% of male respondents in Ethiopia (17%) and Malawi (13%) reported their performance had improved.

The teachers who were targeted by this project, had not been trained in ATL methodologies prior to the star school project. They identified the transformation that they were witnessing in their students as a result of the new teaching approaches.

In the case of the school management, where the management was committed, structured and strategic, there were better results in implementation of the other four components of the project. This was observed in Ethiopia in March 8 Primary School, and Wotat Ambayi, and in Malawi the same held true in Mchuchu Primary and Thoza Primary School. In these schools, where the principals applied the newly acquired leadership and management techniques, the teachers were more responsive in their application of the ATL teaching methodologies. In addition, the learning environment tended to be in better condition and the parents had more confidence in the management. This was resulting in better learning outcomes for the students.

The comprehensive child approach was identified as particularly relevant in both countries visited. In Malawi for example, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and school drop rates amongst girls are particularly high in the districts where the project is being implemented. The same trend was observed though to a lower extent in Ethiopia. According to UNICEF, about 46% of girls are married before the age of 18, and 9% before the age of 15. The main drivers of child marriage are poverty, cultural and religious traditions, and peer pressure. Child marriage is often associated with limited education and employment opportunities, and is seen as a way of protecting girls from out of wedlock pregnancy. In Ethiopia UNICEF reported that 4-10 women were married or in union before their 18th birthday. Ethiopia is home to 15 million child brides including currently married girls and women who were first married in childhood.

A value of a safe and conducive learning environment cannot be gainsaid. Where the school environment was generally in good condition, the students reported better learning outcomes, and the teachers were more motivated. In schools that had dilapidated classrooms or lacked sufficient classrooms, the students' performance did not improve to the same extent as those who had at least a classroom. For example, it was observed that in Mwatibu and Mtenthera primary schools in Malawi, the teachers including the head teacher lacked motivation or inspiration. In Mwatibu close to 50% of the school population was learning under trees because they didn't have classrooms; the student population was also very large in both schools. When the evaluator looked at performance results, they had actually declined in some years or remained stagnant at very low performance. The same was the case in Mtenthera.

The role of parents and the community in building and sustaining quality education was very evident. Parents played a key role by investing in development infrastructure in the school as well as monitoring the school management, teachers and the students to ensure high standard of discipline was being observed and teachers were punctual in class at all times.

b. Involvement of other relevant actors as resource persons in the project components

The Star School project had interventions in 5 main domains as has been mentioned in previous sections. The main approach was to work in primary schools. However, strategic partnerships were also pursued with Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs/ CTEs), the Ministry of Education officials in the respective districts, the Teachers Union and other non-state actors working in the field of education. For example, in Malawi, the initial strategy was to work through other local organizations, but this was later changed after a year. However, the collaboration with these other non-state actors has continued.

The involvement of the different actors in the various activities in the project, particularly in the various trainings for teachers and school management teams was useful in building ownership for the project and laying the foundation for sustainability and scalability. Involvement of the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs/CTE) as Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) in the Active Teaching and Learning (ATL) trainings meant that they could adopt the lessons from these trainings learnt, into the training curriculum used in the colleges. Secondly, the TTCs/CTE, send trainee teachers to the participating schools for their practical training for 6 months; as they supervise the trainee teachers, they also provide feedback to the regular teachers. This has contributed to improving the quality of delivery of the ATL approaches in the schools.

Involvement of the Ministry of Education officials at the district level was also instrumental in ensuring policy alignment which would contribute to sustainability and scalability. Ministry of education officials including the District Education Managers (DEM) in Malawi and Woreda Education Representatives in Ethiopia, Primary Education Advisors (PEA) in Malawi and School Supervisors in Ethiopia were all involved in the various trainings in the different project components. They were also trained as ToTs of the ATL approach. This has meant that as they supervise the schools, they have been instrumental in guiding and providing continuous support in the implementation of ATL by the teachers as well as supporting the school management.

The joint monitoring exercises undertaken by the various actors as a group in the case of Malawi, (EEDF, DEM, PEA, TTCs, TUM etc) were useful in reinforcing the project objectives to the teachers and management, and they provided very rich feedback for the schools to be able to implement their new skills effectively. This involved classroom observation using a common matrix, followed by a feedback session that included some retraining where gaps were identified. This was particularly the case in Malawi.

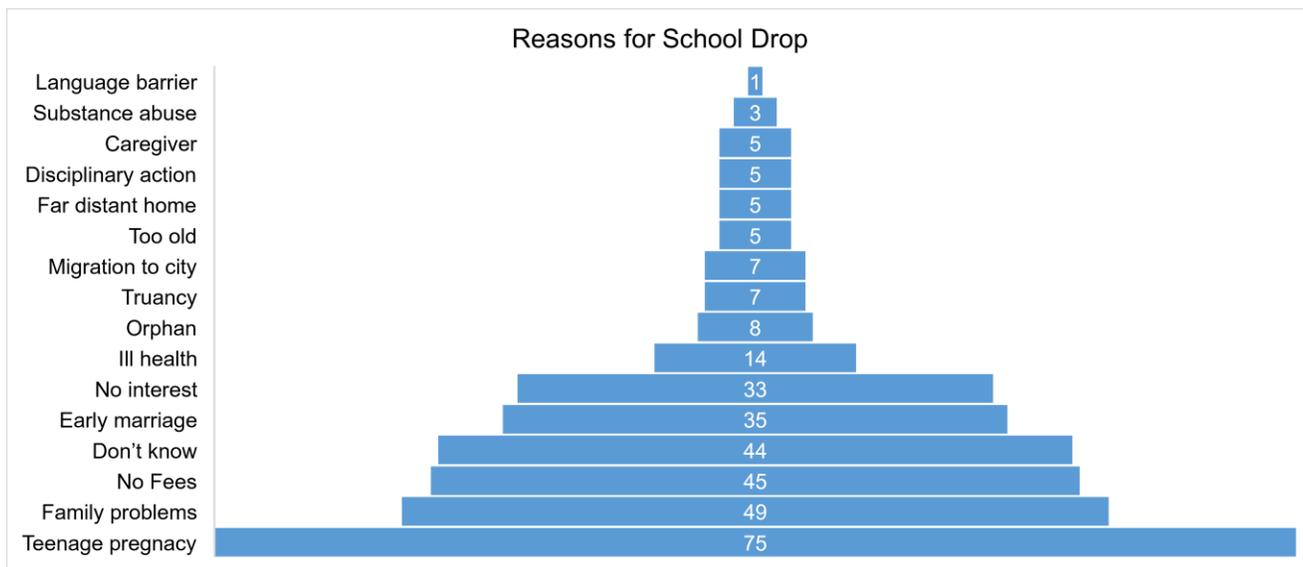
c. Use of own experience to train the teachers in ATL

The training workshops organised for teachers, used a very practical and innovative approach. Short films were recorded of teachers teaching in their classrooms. Teachers participating in the trainings were able to see their own videos and those of their peers and assess whether they were teaching effectively. ATL training was carried out on the basis of these videos. Concepts and ideas were reinforced through reference to the videos. This made the new methodology not only practically relevant, but also understandable for the participants. They could relate to what was good and what needed improvement, not only for themselves but also for their peers.

d. The introduction of clubs for CSE and SEL

In both countries, it was established that the drop-out rates and absenteeism particularly amongst girls was alarmingly high. Causes of drop-out included teenage pregnancy, early marriage, the onset of puberty, poverty amongst others. 60% of pupils responding in the Mini Student Survey reported they knew of a student that had dropped out of school. Majority were in the upper grades 7 and 8 with Malawi having the highest number of reported cases of drop out and that it was a female student (64%) that had dropped out in the last one year. The chart below illustrates why students dropped out. Respondents in the Mini Student Survey revealed in Malawi that the main reason for drop out was teenage pregnancy early marriage and lack of school fees. In Ethiopia respondents cited family problems as one of reasons for drop out as well as lack of school fees and lack of interest in continuing with education. See the table below from the Mini Student Mobile Survey Report. Teenage pregnancy in Malawi and Family problems in Ethiopia were the leading causes for school dropout cited by the children.

Chart 1: Reasons for drop out by country



The decision to include CSE and SEL in the programme was very instrumental in addressing some of the very critical challenges that are affecting the performance of girls in school. Further, the decision to do it through clubs also ensured that what is a socially difficult subject could be discussed freely.

In Malawi for example through the My World My Life Clubs, parents were also organised in parents' groups, where they were exposed to the information that the children were also learning in the clubs. This brought comfort to the parents who were initially apprehensive that their children were being exposed to sexual content.

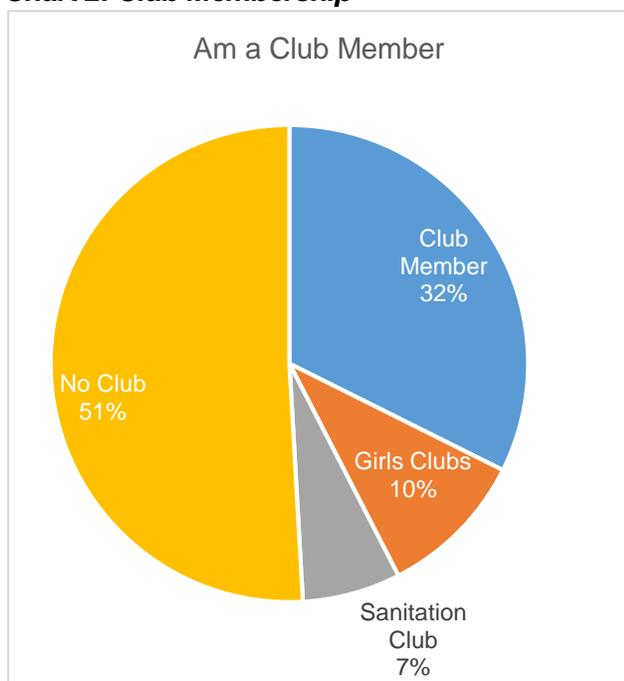
2.1.2 Perceived value and relevance by the beneficiaries

Over 84% of the teachers interviewed expressed that the Active Teaching and Learning were relevant to them and the students. In both countries, the education policy was leaning towards more learner centred approaches and as such, teachers found a practical hands-on-programme that made this transition easier. Teachers in Ethiopia also mentioned that the lesson plan template that was provided by DEC was very systematic and more use friendly.

The students also indicated that school was more fun, and teachers were approachable and engaging. The ATL methodologies had reduced the gap between teachers and students and this was greatly appreciated by the students. Parents speaking in the FGDs noted that they had witnessed improvement in the performance of children in their schools as this approach was helping their children learn better. They mentioned students were more enthusiastic about coming to school and had better grades.

With regard to the CSE and SEL focus, students revealed that they had learnt very useful and relevant lessons that have helped them in life and in their schooling.

Chart 2: Club Membership



This information was relevant because the students were going through transitions from childhood to adulthood, with many changes physically, emotionally and socially, and as such, this training was providing a very good basis to understand themselves and how to relate with the opposite gender and society in a positive way. In Malawi both boys and girls, said that they had greatly benefitted from the My World My Life clubs. A total of 49% of respondents in the Mini Student Survey said they were a member of a club. In Malawi 32% of all respondents reported they were a member of My World My Life Club. While in Ethiopia 17% of the total respondents were members of the Girls Club (10%) or the Sanitation Club (7%). See the chart from the Mini Student Mobile Survey Report;

With regard to the learning environment, the schools where a girl's changing room, and ablution facilities had been built were very relevant, as they provided facilities that helped the girls cope with what is a normal biological cycle. In Ethiopia the girls greatly appreciated the changing room as it provided them an opportunity to maintain their hygiene and they could even rest and have tea to deal with any discomfort they were experiencing during this time.

With regard to the leadership training provided to head teachers over 94% of the head teachers interviewed indicated that the training was very relevant because, they usually do not receive any other training on management and leadership once they are promoted from being teachers to head teachers. As such they had no other form of training or support besides this project.

2.1.3 Relevance to country situation and policy

The Star School Programme was found to be relevant to the country's policy positions in both Ethiopia and Malawi. In Malawi, some of the relevant policies include Vision 2020 which represents Malawi's long-term development strategy; Chapter Seven looks at social sector developments emphasising on education and how to reduce illiteracy and improve the quality. It also focuses on how to deploy and effectively utilise human resources. Other policies include the National Education Standards-Primary and Secondary Education (2015), which specifies the expected outcomes for learners which should be delivered by all education providers. In Ethiopia, the education sector develops and implements a multi-year Educational Sector Development Program (ESDP) with the current being ESDP V 2015-2020 titled Second Growth and Transformation Plan. The priority programmes focus on quality, access, equity and internal efficiency as well as capacity development for improved management.

The priorities of the education policies in the two countries are consistent with those of international agreements, such as Education for All, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Both countries had adopted variations of the ATL approach in their policy documents. In Ethiopia, the government is implementing what they refer to as the learner centred approach to teaching. One of the practical adjustments introduced was to organise students in a classroom into groups. Each group has about 8 students sitting on either side of a desk, facing each other. This is the permanent classroom sitting arrangement. This approach was adopted to facilitate group work and group discussion in the classroom. Further, the text books have components of ATL, step by step instructions are provided to the teacher on where to use discussions, or group work or field work etc. The ATL training gave teachers a scientific formula for setting up the groups, as well as the tools for implementing active learning techniques, thus complementing what government was already doing. In Malawi, the government has recognised the importance of implementing more learner centred approaches in the classroom, but had not practically begun rolling out the approach. This project therefore provided a good test case, which the government could use to roll out a country wide process of shifting to ATL approaches.

With regard to the school improvement, in both Malawi and Ethiopia the schools are expected to prepare a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in the case of Malawi and a strategic plan in the case of Ethiopia. These documents are prepared through a participatory process involving teachers, parents and even students, to set out the priorities of the school. In Malawi, investment by the project towards improving the school learning environment, was informed by these plans in the respective schools. In addition, government was also offering some small grants, what was referred to as School Improvement Grants (SIGs), which were supposed to fund the activities outlined in the SIP.

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, it was found that there are structures involving parents in the school management. These structures are prescribed by government through policy. In Malawi, parents were involved in 3 different ways, the School Management Committee, the Parents Teachers Association and the Mother Group. In Ethiopia, parents are involved through the Parents Teachers Association. The projects focus on sensitizing and equipping parents to be involved in the school management and development, was actually complementary to what the government had already set up.

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, it was identified that the government had introduced life skills as a subject in the schools. In Malawi, the introduction of CSE through the clubs complemented what was being taught through the life skills course.

2.1.4 Coherence and/or complementarity to activities of other stakeholders

Apart from the government, which is evidently undertaking complementary activities. It was found that both DEC and EDDF were implementing complementary activities in the same schools.

DEC in Ethiopia, had several projects with the same school for example the Life Skills project, which was training both teachers and students in life skills. In Malawi, the Teacher Training Colleges, were found to be undertaking complementary activities. They were involved in the ATL training sessions undertaken by EEDF, and as such were able to adopt these techniques into their own teacher training curriculum. At a second level, they send trainee teachers to the schools for their practical training, which lasted six months. During this time, they assess the trainee teachers on a regular basis. It was found that they were providing feedback and support not only to their students but also to the teachers who had been trained on ATL.



2.2 EFFECTIVENESS

In this section, the evaluators seek to establish whether the Star School Programme achieved the objectives as were laid out in the programme document. This section seeks to explain the identification and targeting of beneficiaries; the evaluation also goes a step further and asks the critical question, of the extent to which, the achievement of the target result actually contributed to the overall objective, and the main strategies that lead to the achievement.

The Evaluation Team used the evaluation scale given in the table below and added on the RAG scale (The Traffic Lights) to give a visual impression of the status.

Table 4: Effectiveness scale key

Scale	Explanation	RAG
Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
Highly effective	Achieved 80 - 99% targets and has made some contribution to improving the quality of education	Green Amber
Effective	Achieved 50 – 79% targets with little contribution to the quality of education	Amber
Not effective	Achieved less than 50% targets with little contribution to the quality of education	Red

2.2.1 Was identification and targeting of beneficiaries accurate?

Has the project effectively targeted beneficiaries in the five domains of quality primary education?

Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
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The impact statement identifies the target for the programme as marginalised children and provides specification on the parameters of marginalisation in the project document to mean children from poor communities, with poor infrastructure, lacking in the basic amenities such as safe drinking water, food sufficiency, electricity and safe housing and vulnerable to climate change shocks.

Within these parameters, the targeting of students was found to be excellent, as students of the schools that were visited, who had benefited from the programme were within the criterion stated above.

In addition, it was found that girls in both Malawi and Ethiopia were vulnerable to negative cultural practices that were affecting their performance in school and resulting in them dropping out.

These included early marriage, being pulled out of school to work for income, teenage pregnancy, Female Genital Mutilation and just general gender discrimination. As such the programme was well informed to target girls and providing CSE exposure and life skills knowledge.

The targeting of schools was found to be excellent. Regions targeted represented the diversity of the countries. Some of those regions are the most environmentally challenged which stifles development and as such are also the poorest and with very poor infrastructure, negatively impacting their accessibility. Examples include Chikwawa in Malawi and Afar in Ethiopia. Evidently, not only did the programme work in urban and accessible areas, but deliberate effort was made to reach the more difficult areas. Most of the schools visited had great need for infrastructure improvement. Buildings were either in dilapidated condition, semi-permanent, inadequate classrooms resulting in children learning under trees (This was particularly the case in Malawi), inadequate ablution facilities and inadequate or in some instances lack of basic classroom facilities like blackboards, chairs, and desks. This was however observed in all Malawi schools, and in the rural schools in Ethiopia. In Addis Ababa, it was observed that the school infrastructure and facilities were of very good quality, the only challenge was that since the schools were very big in number of students, some even as big as 5,000 students in a school, the ablution facilities were very stretched.

It was however noted, that though this was the result, there was no scientific targeting process that was employed at the beginning of the project to deliver this result. As such the evaluation concluded that this was more of a coincidence than a deliberate action. In Ethiopia, the Woreda representatives were involved in selecting the schools, so they ensured that there were at least more than one school in different clusters. In Malawi, the schools selected were those where the TTCs had a previous relationship.

WERE INTENDED RESULTS FOR EACH OBJECTIVE ACHIEVED?

A total of six objectives are evaluated under this question. Overall, the achievement of intended results of the Edukans Star School Programme was assessed as “**Highly Effective**”. A closer review of achievement under each objective reveals that results were varied and the details are elaborated for each objective are in the sections that follow. The six objectives evaluated under this question are as follows:

Table 5: Overall Rating: Achievement of objectives

Specific Objective	Achievement
Objective 1 Teachers effectively apply social and emotional learning and/or comprehensive sexuality education in their classrooms	Excellent
Objective 2 Enhanced school safety	Effective
Objective 3 Teachers effectively apply active teaching and learning in their classrooms	Excellent
Objective 4 School leaders effectively apply leadership and management skills	Excellent
Objective 5 Schools monitored by strong parent community groups like PTA's and SMC's, community groups enforce laws and regulations –	Highly Effective
Objective 6 Government and educational authorities effectively support schools	Excellent

2.2.2 Were the intended results for Objective 1 achieved?

Objective 1: Teachers effectively apply social and emotional learning and/or comprehensive sexuality education in their classrooms

Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
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The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was **Excellent**. This objective was pursued by establishing the **My World My Life Clubs in Malawi**. Each of the schools visited had established the respective club.

In Malawi, all (32%) respondents *in the Mini Student Survey* reported they had participated in the **My World My Life Club**. Both boys and girls indicated that they had learnt about sexual and reproductive health, how to relate with one another in a healthy manner and other life skills. The teachers observed, that as a result of this club, boys were more respectful of girls, and sensitive to the girls needs especially during their menstrual period. Previously boys would tease the girls during their menstrual period, but this had stopped. In addition, girls were emerging as more confident students and becoming very competitive even against the boys. While previously the girls would feel shy, working in groups with boys, this had greatly changed, and it was observed that girls were not only confident active participants in the group sessions, but they were also often the group leaders during group work. In 30% of the schools visited, girls had topped the charts in the Class eight national examinations. In another 40% though a girl was not the top student, there were more girls in top 10 position than boys.

Interviews and discussions (KII and FGDs) conducted by The Evaluator in schools in both Malawi and Ethiopia all confirm a reduction in absenteeism and drop-out rates of girls in particular, but also of boys. This was attributed to two factors; girls were more confident to come to school at the onset of menstruation as they felt that their needs were catered for and secondly that through the life skills training, the students were more deliberate in the pursuit of education, as they could relate to the value of a good education.

Factors affecting achievement of Objective 1:



- The decision to introduce CSE and SEL through clubs rather than as a subject in the classroom, was very useful in ensuring a soft landing for the contents. Because the material was delivered in a non-threatening friendly environment, the learners latched onto it more readily and developed a strong friendly relationship with the teachers involved, thus allowing them to open up to their challenges.
- In addition to offering guidance and knowledge the clubs also offered practical support to the students. This was providing practical support to girls during their menstrual period, thus encouraging them to participate in the clubs and the benefits thereof. They were also trained on how to make sanitary towels with local material
- In Malawi, a manual was developed for the clubs, which was the basis of the training of facilitators. In Malawi, they adopted the curriculum from Uganda, and customised it to the local context. It is based on the daily lives of 2 children, a boy and a girl. The content was made age appropriate and submitted to government before it was deployed. This ensured that there was ownership even from government.
- In Malawi, parents indicated that they were initially apprehensive about their children being exposed to sexual content, so involving them in the club activities also helped develop buy-in and create a level of comfort with the content and approach. Because parents were very concerned about their children dropping out of school especially the girls, they then were very instrumental in supporting the teachers to further reinforce what was being taught through the clubs.

Recommendations for Objective 1:

- The government could adopt the clubs as a complementing strategy for the life skills course that is offered in the curriculum. This will ensure that there is continuity, but also provide a value add for the government initiative on providing life skills.

2.2.3 Were the intended results for Objective 2 achieved?

Objective 2: Enhanced school safety

Effective Achieved 50 – 79% targets with little contribution to the quality of education **Amber**

The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was **Effective**. The Star School Programme intended to invest in improving the school environment to make it safe and conducive for learning. This included both the physical environment and the social-emotional environment. The project document notes that the “*Social-emotional school climate refers to spheres of school life reflecting patterns of people’s experiences in a school environment including norms, goals, interpersonal relationships, and how “connected” or attached individuals feel with one another (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Overall, positive school environment promotes meaningful learning (Cohen et al., 2009) and therefore is crucial for quality education*”.

In Malawi, the Star School Programme invested in improving the physical infrastructure of the various schools that were part of the project. The decision on what to invest in was dependent on what was identified as priority in the School Improvement Plan of each school and the available resources. Initially the schools each received a grant of EURO1,450 in the first year and EURO480 in the second year, this was channelled through third party partners, not directly to the schools.

These funds were given to the school as a grant. In terms of infrastructure, the funds were used to build changing rooms for girls, toilet blocks, repair of water tanks and refurbishing of classrooms. With regard to classroom improvements, the funds were used for buying or repairing blackboards, repairing chairs and desks and installing doors that were lockable as well as constructing ramps for easing the access of those with physical disability.

These initiatives provided some minute reprieve to the rather deplorable condition of most of the schools that were part of the evaluation. 60% of the **schools visited** did not have adequate classrooms, so they had students learning under trees. In 80% of the **schools visited**, the average classroom size was 150 students, in a class that was built to accommodate half that number; in 70% of the **schools visited**, most classrooms had children sitting on the floor with no desks or chairs. However, the classrooms, toilets and general compound was clean, an indication that efforts were being made to maintain a clean environment. It was actually difficult to locate the location of the toilets as there was no bad odour emanating from them.

The Evaluation concludes that level of investment made minimal impact due to the enormous infrastructural needs in the schools. The Evaluation commends the utilisation of the limited infrastructure improvement funds applied innovatively in two instances as follows;

- **Girls’ Changing Rooms:** the students, teachers and parents all reported that these new facilities were a tremendous addition to the school infrastructure as the girls were able to maintain hygiene and their dignity during their menstrual period, a factor that was contributing to improved attendance and concentration while in school.

Girls Boarding Block: the students, teachers and parents all reported that these new facilities had a tremendous outcome on girls’ attendance and performance. In 3 schools, Kalumbu Primary, Thozza Primary and Mbawa Primary, the evaluation found that the project had facilitated the refurbishment of a classroom block and converted it to a boarding block for girls in grade 8. This had a big impact in the performance of the girls, as they were able to access extra tutoring in the evenings from the teachers who resided within the schools as well as have extra study time at night away from household chores. In both the schools, the head teachers reported that for the first time, students from their schools had performed exceptionally well in the national exams and had qualified and been admitted to district boarding secondary schools. This was rated a huge success as all the students that were selected were all from the girls in the boarding section.

This explains the response by boys in the Mini Student Survey who said one of the ways to improve their academic performance was to build boarding facilities for boys.

In Ethiopia, the project focussed on improving the sanitation and hygiene of the schools by establishing the Student Led School Sanitation and Hygiene Clubs. Through the clubs the programme sought to create awareness, consciousness and change of behaviour on hygiene and sanitation matters. The Evaluation observed students who had been trained through the clubs, were sharing the information for example during the formal *flag raising ceremonies* attended by all students and teachers and on 'mini media' (an initiative run by the students in Addis Ababa where they broadcast information through a loudspeaker in the school).

The Evaluator's observations noted that in majority (60%) of the **schools visited**, garbage bins could be spotted in the school compounds and locally made information billboards were prominently displayed. However, compounds had paper littered everywhere; in some schools, broken desks and chairs were dumped in a heap in areas where they posed a risk to children. The culture of a clean hygienic and sanitary environment and the requisite behaviour change had not taken root in the schools. Water too was a huge challenge in rural and urban (Addis Ababa) schools. In one school in Addis, the toilets were closed because there was no water.

In Addis Ababa, the Evaluator observed that school infrastructure was in good condition though inadequate and more classrooms were needed as the student population was too high. In the rural areas The Evaluator observed that schools were in dire need of infrastructure upgrade as classrooms were in a deplorable state. The ambition of each school to upgrade its' facilities was articulated in each school's Strategic Plan, a clear indication that this was a priority for the schools. Based on school plans reviewed, the Evaluator concludes that the construction of hygiene facilities in school was a priority of the project rather than a priority of the school. As a result, the link between the attainment of this objective and the improvement of the school environment was found to be weak.

On the other hand, the evaluation found that the My World My Life Club and the Girls' Club, contributed to improving the social-emotional environment in the respective schools. Respondents to the Mini Students Survey were asked if students experienced abuse in school in the form of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. 75% of the respondents reported there was no abuse in school. In addition, the students cited that the clubs helped improve their knowledge on hygiene (25%); menstruation (20%) and self-confidence (19%). It observed that girls were comfortable with the reality of their menstrual periods. This had a big impact in their level of confidence in interactions with other students as well as their teachers.

Beyond the contribution made by the club, 90% of the respondents felt that boys and girls were equally treated in school, an indication that the schools were gender sensitive in their approach. This together with the clubs, contributed to creating a healthy social and emotional environment for the students.

As such, though the physical infrastructure was not improved, the social and emotional environment had improved, and this could be related to the activities of the project.

Factors affecting the achievement of Objective 2

low budgetary allocation

The SEL and CSE Clubs

- One of the main factors affecting the achievement of this objective was the low budgetary allocation in an area of great need. As has been mentioned above, the physical environment needs in most of the schools visited in both countries was apparent with the exception of schools in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. As such to make meaningful impact, to the physical environment, a huge financial investment is required. The funds for this objective were too limited to achieve any meaningful result.

- The SEL and CSE taught through the clubs, was instrumental in improving the social and emotional environment of the schools. Students reported having more positive interactions with their peers and with the teachers.

Recommendations for Objective 2:

- The evaluation notes that infrastructure development is very capital intensive, as such in the future, the programme should consider partnering with others as well as exploring low cost affordable construction options.
- Besides classrooms, boarding facilities for boys and girls have shown their worth, as the students who were able to board were performing better, due to better concentration and additional tutoring. Also housing of teachers in school or nearby was also identified as being useful. In the Mini Student Mobile Survey students identified construction of teachers' houses as a priority that they would consider if they were the head teacher. This is because when teachers lived close by, it increased their availability for the students especially for schools that are more difficult to access.

2.2.4 Were the intended results for Objective 3 achieved?

Objective 3: Teachers effectively apply active teaching and learning in their classrooms

Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
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The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was **Excellent**. The Star School Programme supported the professional development of teachers through the Basic Education Quality Improvement Programme (BEQUIP). Through BEQUIP trainings, teachers develop skills to teach in ways through which learners achieved higher results and therefore better prospects to progress to secondary or tertiary education.

In Malawi, 5 teachers were selected from each school including the, heads of sections (infant, lower primary and upper primary), the head teacher and deputy head teacher. The invitation to attend the training for teacher was strategically extended to representatives of the Teacher Training Colleges, the Primary Education Advisors and District Education Managers. Similarly, in Ethiopia, 5 teachers were selected but representing the various subjects as well as the head teacher and deputy head teacher. The invitation to participate in the training for teachers was also strategically extended to the Cluster Supervisors and the Woreda Education Representatives. This evaluation concludes from observations made where teaching was observed that teachers were effectively applying active teaching and learning methods in their classrooms. In Malawi adoption of the new teaching methodology was 100% while in Ethiopia there were variations with rural schools adopting the methodology fully while teachers in Addis Ababa not fully adopting the active teaching and learning as the default methodology for all their teaching.

As a result of adopting and using active teaching and learning, schools reported tremendous progress in various indicators for example;

- 90% of the schools reported they had experienced improvement in the average grade scored by the school, some schools indicated that they had improved from an average of 50% to an average of 75%; others indicated that in the grade eight examination they had moved from a pass rate of 70% to 100% pass rate; still yet others especially in Malawi indicated that they had students admitted to district secondary boarding schools for the first time in the life of the school following grade 8 national exams. ATL methodologies had made learning more effective for students where they were deployed effectively. Students were more eager to learn, they understood concepts better and learning was an enjoyable experience. As such, this was evident in their grades. This is corroborated by the Mini Student Survey where students were asked to evaluate their own performance in the last one year. 50% of the respondents said their performance in the last term was above 75%. Only 9% reported that their performance was below 30% in the last term;

- As a result of implementing ATL, schools also reported increased enrolment and a reduction in absenteeism as school was now considered fun. Parents in Malawi speaking in the FGDs reported that word was going around to those not in school to come back to school as it was now fun. A key interview with the head teachers for Sonkhwe, revealed that this approach was also conducive for supporting integration of children with special needs, and so as a result they had encouraged parents to enrol their children resulting in enrolment of 4 students with hearing impairment, 4 with visual disability and 1 physically challenged child. In addition, general enrolment also went up, as students share with others, how school is now enjoyable) in Malawi reported a 20% increase in enrolment after the school rolled out the new teaching methodology.
- Students reported in the Mini Student Survey that teachers were using ATL methodologies. They also reported that teachers using ATL were approachable and engaging in particular from the survey,
 - 72% of respondents reported that the teachers always (32%) or quiet often (40%) used discussions and debates in class to teach. Overall respondents in Malawi reported that always or quiet often the teachers used discussions & debates in class to teach. Respondents in the higher levels in grades 7 and 8 reported that their teachers used discussions & debates in class to teach;
 - 75% of respondents reported that the teachers always (33%) or quiet often (41%) used tasks and experiments in class to teach;
 - 35% of respondents reported that they quiet often used other educational materials besides what was provided by their subject teachers such as textbooks, newspaper articles etc.
 - 61% of respondents that they always (26%) or quiet often (35%) used other materials besides what was given as notes by their subject teachers. Respondents in the higher levels in grades 7 and 8 in both countries reported that they used materials besides what was given as notes by their subject teachers.

The Evaluator observed and concludes that the communication gap that had existed between teachers and students previously had actually reduced. In both Malawi and Ethiopia, students though respectful of their teachers, did not seem intimidated by them, they spoke to them confidently, answered questions confidently when asked, and were not shy to ask questions. 94% of the respondents responding in the Mini Student Survey said they were comfortable to ask questions in class. Overall respondents from both countries in grade 7 and 8 reported they were confident to ask questions in class. This was especially evident in Ethiopia, where students even debated openly with their teachers. This was evidently contributing positively to the knowledge acquisition journey that the students were on.

Teachers on the other hand speaking in FGDs reported that ATL had made teaching easier and the management of large classes more effective and efficient. This was very evident especially in Malawi, where the evaluator observed teaching in classrooms of up to 250 students. These were orderly and the learners were following instructions and remaining engaged throughout the lesson. The Evaluator concludes it would be practically impossible to deliver a lesson effectively in any other way in these huge classrooms. ATL proved to be a timely solution to the challenge of large classrooms. In Addis Ababa teachers speaking in the FGD reported they were unable to use the methodology to manage large classrooms, while their counterparts in rural schools reported they effectively used ATL to manage large classrooms.

Factors affecting the achievement of Objective 3



- The ATL Training was delivered in a very practical, participatory and innovative approach, using action learning techniques. Teachers were able to see themselves and identify the weaknesses in the approaches they were using, and were able to compare with the ATL approaches and identify what needed to change. As such, the teachers were driving their own learning process.

Because the training was very practical, and realistic, the teachers were able to assimilate the new knowledge and techniques with ease, and they too were able to transmit the same to their colleagues back at their schools;

- The Programme produced manuals for the six modules which were given to the teachers as reference material back in their schools. These manuals provided very good reference material for the teachers to refresh their knowledge, as well as share the knowledge with their colleagues;
- In Malawi, the teachers have what is referred to as the Continuous Professional Development (CPD). CPD is run within the school, where the school organises in-house seminars and information sharing sessions for the teachers. These CPDs provided a structured approach for the teachers who were trained to train their colleagues who had not attended the project training. As such whilst only 150 teachers were directly trained over 450 teachers had access to the information about ATL methodology in Malawi. This was not the case in Ethiopia, so the cascading effect was not as transformational;
- The ATL approach introduced, fun and activity in the classroom. Students were looking forward to lessons, and as a result they were also performing better. This acted as a motivation for teachers, so they wanted to do more;
- DEC in Ethiopia and EEDF in Malawi carried out regular monitoring visits, where they would undertake classroom observation and give feedback to the teachers. The information gathered through these sessions were used to design the refresher courses that were offered. Emphasis was placed where greatest weaknesses were identified. This allowed for inaccurate implementation of ATL to be corrected before they became entrenched;
- The involvement of the head teacher, and deputy head teacher in the training was strategic as it ensured that the leadership of the school was aware of the contents of the training and they were able to monitor and enforce compliance by the teachers. Where the head teacher was a strong, visionary leader who had joined the project from the start, the implementation of ATL was deeply entrenched in how the teachers taught including innovating and localising the methodology. Therefore, where teachers were struggling to adopt and implement ATL, the Evaluator concludes that the strategic partnerships i.e. with the leadership of the school as well as the Ministry of Education District Advisors and Administrative Officials was weak as there is a strong co-relation between strong leadership and effective delivery of ATL;
- The involvement of Teacher Training Colleges, the PEAs and Cluster Supervisors, created a localised mechanism for continuous monitoring and quality control. As these actors are constantly engaged with the schools, they are able to provide regular monitoring and hands-on support on a continuous basis.

Recommendations for Objective 3:

- A real opportunity exists to scale up ATL as the default teaching approach in both countries. In both Ethiopia and Malawi that worked closely with the CTEs and TTCs respectively, a process of developing adoption of BEQUIP into their Teacher Training Programme could be pursued so that it is mainstreamed into regular teacher training curriculum. Going to school and not learning is a wasted opportunity since going to school every day is not learning. The Star School Programme has substantially improved in attitude of teachers and skilled them to manage large classrooms and teach effectively.
- The evaluation recognised that the cascading approach employed in Malawi through the CPD in schools was very effective as well as the structure for cascading through the cluster school's framework in Ethiopia. Both these approaches could be adopted together and deployed as a formal approach for cascading lessons learnt. This could be documented and a mechanism for monitoring developed and included as part of the project approach.

2.2.5 Were the intended results for Objective 4 achieved?

Objective 4: School leaders effectively apply leadership and management skills

Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
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The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was Excellent. All head teachers interviewed by the evaluator and speaking as key informants reported that they had greatly benefitted from the training especially on effective management and leadership. People management was cited as an area of improvement by head teachers... a head teacher in Malawi reported that*I learnt that conflict is not a bad thing, conflict happens in the work place, what makes it a bad thing is the management of the conflict.* A number of head teachers interviewed reported they had changed their leadership style as they had learnt to be.... *leaders not bosses.... the value of collaboration, the value of consulting and the value of team work.*

The change in management style by Head Teachers was corroborated by:

- Teachers speaking in the FGDs; teachers reported that their relationship with their head teachers had improved after the training was rolled out in their schools. Head teachers were described as being more collaborative and open to new ideas. Teachers felt that their head teachers were more approachable and described them as good leaders.
- Parents too speaking in the FGDs; parents too expressed satisfaction in the level of interaction they were having with the head teachers. Head teachers were open and collaborative in their approach, and they were managing the schools well.

It was observed that where the head teacher was committed to the Star School Programme, where the head teacher was a strong leader, other components of the programme were also performing well in their schools. This observation was made in at least 4 schools in Malawi and 2 schools in Ethiopia. Here clubs were thriving, the parents and teachers' committees were active and the general environment of the school had improved. The reverse also held true, and was observed in 2 schools in Malawi. Where the head teacher lacked a vision and motivation, the teachers too were demotivated, the school environment was in disarray and the children were all over the compound making noise and being generally unruly.

Factors Affecting the Achievement of Objective 4



- The training provided by the project on management and leadership provided practical skills and tools that could be used by the head teachers and school management committee to run the school. The training also included what are referred to as section heads in Malawi and departmental heads in Ethiopia. As a result, different levels of management were equipped with the skills to be effective leaders and managers;
- The regular monitoring undertaken by the implementing partner, also helped reinforce the lessons learnt. The PEAs and Cluster Supervisors were also critical in advising head teachers in day to day issues that they were facing in running the school;
- The management was also diligent because the parents were diligent in monitoring them. It was found that where the parents committee were strong and vigilant, the school management including the head teachers, their deputies and departmental and section heads were also very hardworking and innovative;

Recommendations for Objective 4:

- Support for head teachers: Develop a formal strategy to accompany head teachers as they return to their schools to roll out the trainings they receive and practise the new skills. This strategy should be integrated with the work/role of educational authorities and advisors. Additionally, this strategy should address any turnover of head teachers and their deputies when it arises.

2.2.6 Were the intended results for Objective 5 achieved?

Objective 5: Schools monitored by strong parent community groups like PTA's and SMC's, community groups enforce laws and regulations.

Highly Effective	Achieved 80 – 100% targets with little contribution to the quality of education	Green Amber
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The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was highly effective on the increased monitoring role played by the PTAs and SMCs in schools. In Malawi, the management training included representatives of the school management committee. Sensitization workshops were also held for the PTAs in both Malawi and Ethiopia, in these workshops, they learnt about the Star School Programme and their role in promoting quality education in their community schools. Speaking in the FGDs over 70% of the parents in Malawi reported that they had participated in the workshop and had learnt about their role in promoting quality education, resource mobilization and they had also learnt about the 5 points of the star school and were striving to make their schools star schools. In Ethiopia, none of the parents speaking in the FGDs had attended a parents' sensitization workshop on the Star School Programme.

Parents in Malawi reported they were involved in The My World My Life Clubs (MWML), in what was called **The Parents Group**. Through the Parents' Groups, the programme succeeded in getting the buy-in it needed to roll out MWML Clubs content and approach. Initially parents were apprehensive about their children being exposed to what they thought was an overly sexual content. Instead parents have become champions of the lessons learnt in their community. They are organising community sensitization events together with the children involving songs, drama and talks. Through these events, awareness has been created within the community on;

- the value of education for boys and girls;
- the negative impact of negative cultural practices;
- the dangers of teenage sexual relations and others.

In Malawi, The Mother Group became active after attending the Parent Group meetings for MWML and began to play a critical role in ensuring girls remain in school and thrive. They began to provide counselling for girls armed with the knowledge acquired from the MWML Group. The Mother Group initiated visits to girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy and other reasons and encouraged them to return to school. In Kalumbu school for example they had repatriated 4 girls back to school after they delivered their babies. 2 of these girls performed very well in the class 8 examination and were selected to a district boarding school. These women took on in some cases babysitting duties that enabled the young mothers return to school. In yet another school in Malawi, the Mother Group rescued a girl from early marriage and reported her parents to the chief. Together with the chiefs and local authorities, in the Kalumbu area, any parent pulling out their child from school for marriage or for household chores is fined a goat.

Parents speaking in the FGDs reported they were all actively participating in the PTAs and SMCs and were playing their role in monitoring the school's compliance to standards and regulations. Some of the comments made by the parents about their role in school were;

.....we go to school and make random checks.....
...we report early to school to check if students have all reported to school on time....
..... we check if teachers too are present and on time and in class teaching.....

... we sit in the classrooms and observe the level of engagement of everyone.....
..... we reprimand students who come perpetually late to school.....
..... we sometimes go to classrooms where we have heard complaints and sit with the students and ask them to share their experience with the particular teacher with us.....
..... when we find teachers flaunting the regulations of the school, we raise the matter with the head teacher and appropriate disciplinary action is jointly agreed upon. In one school in Malawi, the parents instigated for the transfer of a teacher who had been coming to work drunk.

The evaluator observed a high level of involvement of parents in schools visited in both Malawi and Ethiopia. Parents were contributing to the development projects in the schools; in some cases, they had provided the bricks and labour for construction of buildings, especially classrooms and teachers houses; where there was a school feeding programme, they would collectively cook for the children; in some instances, parents had contributed financial resources for undertaking improvements in the school, for example, in Merawi Kebele school in Ethiopia, the parents, business community and friends from the diaspora over a period of time collected EURO36,000 for the construction of new classrooms. Each family was contributing EURO30 and they were planning to raise up to EURO90,000 by 2020. Parents were also monitoring of development projects, in one of the schools in Malawi, they reported how project funds were not well utilized leading to a project audit an indication that the parents were vigilant and monitoring implementation of projects in their schools.

The Evaluator observed that parents in rural schools were very involved in the school and were diligent about contributing to the improvements of their school compared to parents in urban schools in Addis Ababa.

Factors Contributing to the Achievement of Objective 5



- Parents were found to play a very critical role in monitoring compliance with laid down rule, regulations and procedures. Parents played this role diligently, as they were able to understand that the school belongs to them more as the community and not to the teachers or even the government. They understood that the success of the school was success of the community, as it had a direct bearing on the future of their children. As such, they were diligent in ensuring children came to school on time and that teachers were present, punctual and teaching effectively.
- Cooperation between the school leadership and parents was very key in motivating parents to be involved and to contribute to the school's development. In one of the schools in Malawi, the school community including the management, teachers, parents and students decided to start a school feeding programme, to encourage all children to remain in school especially in between seasons when there's little food.

To achieve this, the school identified a piece of land where they now grow maize, and parents contribute soya beans per family according to their ability. This is milled and the parents have a rotational programme of preparing porridge for the children served during the morning break. This has greatly reduced absenteeism. Though this was not an initiative of the Star School Programme, it was a demonstration that parents were willing to support the development of their school where the management is creative and offering solutions. This was also observed in the Ethiopia example mentioned above. The head teacher, had worked together with the parents in developing a project proposal, and they have been fundraising amongst the parents, from the private sector and even from relatives in the diaspora. In both cases, the head teachers were playing a strong leadership role and driving the vision, but also providing an open participatory environment for parents to own and contribute and provide leadership in different aspects of the project.

- In some instances, the evaluation found that the parents in SMC were not very sure what training they had received; in at least two schools in Malawi, new parents were now in office, and had not received any training. In the case of the former, there was no formal recap or follow-up with the parents after the sensitization meetings to reinforce or establish how they were faring on in implementing their role. In the case of the latter, there was no mechanism for promoting continuity from one parent committee to the next, so when there is a change of guard, the new team was not receiving a comprehensive hand-over. This was seen more as failure of the school leadership rather than a limitation of the project.

Recommendations for Objective 5:

Working with parents: the involvement of parents particularly in Malawi evolved organically and contributed to the success of some of the components of this programme. There is need to build on the existing community support at schools to continue promoting quality education. The lessons learnt from this programme on training and working with parents should be harnessed and documented into a manual on ways to build the capacity and increase the involvement of parents in the management of schools.

2.2.7 Were the intended results for Objective 6 achieved?

Objective 6: Government and educational authorities effectively support schools

Excellent	Achieved 100% or exceeded targets and has greatly contributed to improving quality education	Green
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The evaluation assessment of the achievement of this objective was excellent in terms of government and education authorities' involvement in supporting improvement of quality in schools.

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, the evaluator concludes that, the government officials, had been integrated into the programme at various critical levels. The District Education Managers in Malawi and the Woreda (District) Education Representatives in Ethiopia, were well briefed on the whole aspect of the programme, in addition they were involved in the training of teachers in ATL methodology as well as the training of head teachers and school management committees.

In Ethiopia, the schools are organised in a cluster system usually 5-7 schools. Where one school receives support from the government and is created into a centre of excellence. The centre of excellence is then expected to cascade what they have learnt to the satellite schools in their cluster. The Star School Programme worked with the cluster leads and the Woreda representatives were responsible for selecting participating schools. They were also instrumental in guiding the cascading process to the other cluster schools where they organised sessions for the various cluster groups in their district to participate in information sharing sessions and organise interschool exchanges for peer learning.

This was how the teachers ATL methodologies were cascaded and district teachers were well versed. The Woreda Representative in Bahir Dar adopted the ATL methodologies and oriented all new teachers to his district on its application. He would then pair a new teacher with an expert teacher who is well versed in ATL to increase practise and confidence. For example, 4 schools were trained by DEC in North Mecha District, but all the 74 schools in the district are implementing ATL, due to the initiative driven by the Woreda Education Representative.

In Malawi, the District Education Managers (DEM), were involved in the ATL training for teachers as well as the management and leadership training for head teachers and school management committees.

The DEM for Lilongwe Rural East for example regularly monitored schools to ensure they were implementing ATL approaches. Where a teacher(s) was not performing too well, they would be required to visit a teacher who was confident and learn from them. This strategy enabled ATL as a methodology to spread to schools that were not targeted by the project.

The Primary Education Advisors and Cluster Supervisors in both Ethiopia and Malawi were also involved in the whole project at various critical stages. Together with the district heads they were involved in selecting the schools as well as train as ATL trainers. They formed the first lot of TOTs and became the facilitators during the trainings for the teachers. The trainers then accompanied their teachers back to schools and supported them to roll out the programme and practise the new skills. Using their authority and in their capacity as education advisers and cluster supervisors they would visit schools to observe how the teachers were implementing ATL in the classroom and advise, encourage, correct and train as needed. Teachers would in turn hold workshops in their respective schools to train other teachers; in Malawi this was implemented during the Continuous Professional Development Sessions (CPD) run within the schools. The PEAs would participate in these sessions and support the teachers by facilitating some of the sessions.

The continuous support and accompaniment during implementation provided to the schools at the start of the ATL roll out was found to be the strong factor that contributed to entrenching ATL deeply into participating schools.

Factors Contributing to the Achievement of Objective 6



Decision to involve the government officials

The decision to involve the government officials right from the beginning of the project went a long way in developing buy-in from these critical stakeholders. The Government officials had a 360 degree view of the project and understood it in its entirety. As such they were able to stay engaged and contribute to the implementation of the same. They also integrated the project activities into their regular supervision and capacity building activities.

Recommendations for Objective 5:

Expand partnerships: Explore higher levels of partnership with government to bring in additional funds or benefits to the project for example UNICEF Malawi has a school construction component i.e. Child-Friendly Schools Program an initiative to improve access and quality of education through construction of child-friendly spaces. The programme is implemented by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Association of Christian Educators in Malawi (ACEM), and Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), among others. A similar program the Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project is funded by World Bank through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Similar initiatives could be pursued in Ethiopia.

2.2.8 Were the focus strategies effective in enhancing access and quality of primary education?

The evaluation concludes that the 5 focus areas promoted through the Star School Programme have enhanced the quality education in participating schools. In addition, the strategies employed were Highly Effective in enhancing quality education in the sampled schools. Specifically,

- ATL was identified as an “excellent” strategy for enhancing quality education. ATL was in line with both countries’ policy direction towards learner centred approaches to teaching and learning. In both countries, classrooms dilapidated classroom with inadequate facilities and large numbers of children; this did not constitute a conducive environment for learning, however ATL brought the much needed relieve.

The participatory learner centred approach engages students, keeps them busy drawing attention away from the challenging environment in which they learn. The evaluation concludes that ATL contributed highly to enhancing quality education. The same was also observed in schools in rural Ethiopia.

- The strategy for integrating SEL and CSE in the schools in Malawi was relevant and the use of clubs as an approach enhanced its effectiveness. In all the schools visited in Malawi, negative culture was a huge concern raised by all stakeholders; early marriage, teenage pregnancy, lack of self-esteem, absenteeism and school drop-out were all challenges experienced in all schools. The lack of role models for girls was also a key area of concern.

Through the new clubs, there was awareness and behavioural change for both girls and boys, girls' self-esteem had peaked enabling them to effectively participate in school life and take control of their destiny. The strategy to involve the community in the Programme activities was effective as enlightened parents' put pressure on their peers to abandon backward practices such as early marriage. In some instances, the hard ones were, apprehended and fined. This involvement of parents greatly contributed to the improvement of the girls' performance and through positive peer pressure that of boys as well.

- The evaluation also observed that strengthening the school management committees played a significant role in driving achievement of intended results. As such investing in the leadership and management of the schools was an excellent strategy. Involving the school leadership in the training of teachers was strategic as it increased programme effectiveness.
- The involvement of parents, the community and government officials increased project buy in, and laid the foundation for strong ownership and project and sustainability. Parents and the community play a critical role as demand side agents for quality education, once they understand their role and the value that brings; they are able to have a self-sustaining mechanism that ultimately delivers the intended result i.e. enhanced quality of education. The government, and teacher training institutions play a critical role as supply side agents that guide the teachers and schools on how to deliver quality education. Their involvement was instrumental in the achievement of the required results.



2.3 EFFICIENCY

The evaluation observed mixed results in the resource allocation as well as efficient utilization of the same towards implementation of the 6 objective areas. The evaluation analysed the deployment of human and financial resources in the project.

(i) Human Resources

(ii) Financial Resources

(iii) Planning & Monitoring

2.3.1 Human Resources

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, it was identified that there was adequate human resource allocation for all the 6 objective areas. The project teams implemented the project components as a whole, as such the project team had 360 degrees view of the project, as they were responsible for all the project components. In so doing, the evaluation found that there was an efficient allocation of human capacity, because the components were being implemented concurrently.

In Ethiopia for example, DEC had a programme manager responsible for the project at the headquarters in Addis Ababa and supported by region focal points, who were based in the field.

Due to this arrangement, it was possible to carry out regular monitoring of the project and managing the implementation process more efficiently at minimum cost. They also further partnered with the government education officials on the ground including Teacher Training Colleges. In Malawi, EEDF had a project manager working on this project supported by a programme officer. Though they were based in their head office in Blantyre, they would undertake regular field visits, for project implementation and monitoring progress. This approach tends to be more expensive but the team was still able to effectively implement the project, due to other strategic partnerships that had been established with the TTCs and PEAs.

2.3.2 Financial Resources for project implementation

The financial resources allocated for the 6 objective areas achieved different results, for some of the result areas, the resources allocated were sufficient but in some this was not the case. How financial resources were applied led to efficiency as detailed below:

a. Teachers effectively apply social and emotional learning and/or comprehensive sexuality education in their classrooms – For this result area, the decision to use clubs, enhanced the effectiveness of the approach, but also the efficiency of the same. The approach taken was that teachers were trained as patrons and facilitators and a small group of students were also trained as peer ToTs. They in turn shared the information with the broader school through the clubs. Because of this approach, the resources could reach more students, due to this peer outreach approach.

b. Enhanced school safety – With regard to school safety, the objective was to promote a socially and physically conducive environment for learning. The evaluation revealed that, CSE and SEL objective was also achieving a conducive social and safe environment, as students learnt to better relate amongst themselves and with their teachers. So, the investment in objective one above, was also achieving the results for this objective. This was a big efficiency gain.

The evaluation however found that with regard to the physical environment, the investment for this component was way below the requirements for achieving results. As has been observed in the section on effectiveness, the needs for improving the physical environment especially in Malawi and in rural Ethiopia are enormous. These would require large investments to actualise and demonstrate results. The amount that were invested in Malawi for physical development for example were EURO1,938 per school in the project. Based on the observed need, this amount was too meagre to be able to deliver any meaningful results.

In the case of Ethiopia, the financial report indicates that the project spent an average of EURO1, 251 per school, for the 3 year period. A critical look at the results achieved against the resources expended, returns a slightly different result. The evaluation concluded that the strategy of implementing the SLSSH clubs for the achievement of this objective was not effective.

In addition, looking at the results achieved against resources expended, it was found that this strategy was also not implemented in an efficient manner. There is very little to show on the ground for the resources expended. This was because in quite a number of the schools despite having bin, litter strewn around the compound was observed, toilets were mostly dirty and as was explained earlier, water was found to be a big problem right across both urban and rural schools. This project could have benefitted more from investing in water harvesting and storage to achieve this objective alongside the behavioural change.

CSE applied in classrooms

Enhanced school safety

active teaching & learning applied

leadership and management skills applied

Parents actively involved

Government involved

funding available

c. Teachers effectively apply active teaching and learning in their classrooms – The Evaluation revealed that the implementation of this objective area was highly efficient.

First, the strategic partnership with TTCs and PEAs in Malawi and CTEs and Cluster Supervisors in Ethiopia was a key efficiency approach.

The training of tutors from the CTEs/TTCs and PEAs/Cluster Supervisors as TOTs in the ATL approach was instrumental in entrenching ATL in the education system of the country, it provides the foundation for scaling this approach even further. At project implementation level, these group of actors played a critical role in monitoring and hand holding of the teachers on an ongoing basis as they have a front-end relationship with teachers and schools as part of their day to day roles. As such, more hands on training and advisory continued even after EEDF and DEC had finished their training, at no additional cost to the project.

Second, the project trained 5 teachers each in every school, thus directly training 360 teachers in total. However, through the CPD in Malawi, the teachers trained were able to in turn train their colleagues, multiplying this by an average of a factor of 3. It was estimated based on reports by the head teachers and teachers that on average of at least 450 teachers were using ATL approach in Malawi. This number is likely to be higher, because the DEM mentioned twinning schools that were not part of the project with those that were for purposes of the former learning ATL from the latter. The exact factor of multiplication could not be established in Ethiopia, as there was no structured programme for teachers to train their fellow teachers, it depended on the personal drive of the head teacher. There was however, still a cascading effect to some extent nonetheless.

Third, the strategic partnership with the District Education Managers in Malawi and Woreda Education Representatives in Ethiopia also went a long way in creating efficiency. In Ethiopia, the project took advantage of the cluster framework installed by the government as mentioned in the previous sections. The project mostly worked with the cluster lead schools. These cluster leads were by design expected to facilitate and cascade any lessons learnt to the cluster member schools. In most instances DEC would work with 2 or so schools in a cluster, and these then would reach out to the other schools within their cluster. This was confirmed by the Woreda Representative in Bahir Dar, who explained how they were cascading the lessons on ATL using this cluster framework. As explained in the 2nd point above, the creation of information sharing opportunities between schools that were performing very well and those that were struggling, further extended the reach of ATL beyond the schools that were part of the project. All this was at no extra cost to the project, thus demonstrating high efficiency.

d. School leaders effectively apply leadership and management skills - The evaluation revealed that sufficient resources were allocated for the implementation of this objective area, and the results were commensurate to the resources expended. Unlike the objective area 2 where the cascading effect was integrated into the project component activities in both countries, this was missing in this objective area particularly in Malawi. As mentioned previously, it was found that where a head teacher was moved, the benefits that had been generated as a result of more effective management and leadership were lost, because the benefits were resident in the individual rather than in an institution. The DEM in Malawi also acknowledged that this was a weak link, and was affecting schools, especially when a very good headmaster was either promoted or moved to another school.

In Ethiopia, however the cluster framework was providing a good platform for experience sharing amongst the head teachers (Directors) and an opportunity to cascade the lessons on management within the cluster schools even amongst those who were not part of the project, thus expanding reach. It was also observed that investment in the head teacher and management more generally, had a great contribution in the success of the other components of the project. As such, the decision of investing in management was a key success factor for the rest of the project. Where the head teacher was an effective leader, the other components were also successful.

Schools monitored by strong parent community groups like PTA's and SMC's, community groups enforce laws and regulations – The evaluation revealed mixed results from the different countries on the efficiency of the approach used in this objective area. In Malawi, a cost effective approach was used to training parents committees, where the training was held as day events in the local area, rather than residential events. This greatly reduced the cost of trainings.

The results observed were commensurate with resources expended. In Ethiopia on the other hand, the resources used for implementation of this component was about 65% of resources used to implement component 4 above. All parents who were interviewed had not participated in the sensitization sessions, this was interpreted to mean, that, the gains for the engagement approach employed could be easily eroded, thus losing the whole investment. The lack of institutionalisation of the lessons taught to parents had a big cost implication because it meant that with every new group members of a committee, there was no institutional memory transfer of lessons learnt by the previous committee members, thus a total loss of the respective investment.

- e. **Government and educational authorities effectively support schools** – This objective area, returned the highest efficiency measure in this project. Pursuing a strategic relationship with government, went a long way in creating efficiencies within the objective and doing so was also achieved at very minimal cost to the project. In both Malawi and Ethiopia, the government officials at the district were included through a strategic partnership. This built their level of ownership of the project, and they were able to use their existing structures to facilitate the cascading of the project as well as providing monitoring and hand holding support at no additional cost to the project. This also provides a longer lasting effect in terms of the results that have been achieved, thereby stretching the life cycle of the resources expended.
- f. **Financial Resources for project monitoring** - Monitoring of project implementation and results is one of the critical elements of enhancing effectiveness, but also efficiency. It ensures that results are being achieved on-schedule and on-budget. This project provided for monitoring of every component within the component activities. However due to the complementarity during implementation, monitoring of components could be undertaken jointly rather than as individual activities. This resulted in some cost savings in the monitoring budget.

2.3.3 Planning and Monitoring

The evaluation identified that in the first year, there was a delay in implementation of the programme in both countries due to delayed disbursements. In Ethiopia this was further compounded by the fact that there was political unrest and as such the activities could not be conducted as planned. All the activities were however eventually completed.

Monitoring and evaluation of the projects was undertaken on a quarterly basis in Malawi and every month in Ethiopia. The beneficiaries appreciated the regular monitoring as this enabled the project benefits to become entrenched. Monitoring resources had been provided for in each project component, but due to the fact that the programme was implemented as a whole, the projects were monitored concurrently therefore saving on the cost of monitoring.



2.4 IMPACT

The impact statement for this programme was to contribute to *“Sustainable livelihoods and active citizenship through development of knowledge, skills and attitudes of marginalized children and youth.”*

This evaluation revealed that the project contributed to this impact statement, though a direct correlation could not be immediately drawn between primary education outcomes and sustainable livelihoods. The evaluation concludes from schools visited, observations made, discussions and interviews conducted that the quality of education improved that students achieved a higher pass rate with some moving from a pass rate in the 60% to over 75%. This is a clear indication that students are achieving better learning outcomes. Higher pass rates translate to high transition rates to secondary school. This has the eventual result of improving learners' chances for gaining employable skills in the future and thus developing sustainable livelihood options.

The evaluation analysed the 3 long-term outcome areas that had been articulated in the programme document to draw inference on the achievement of the main impact statement. The same is further discussed below.

2.4.1 Students demonstrate positive social behaviour?

The attitude and social behaviour of students impacts the relationships they have with each other, with themselves and with teachers. This can be influenced to a great extent by the social and emotional environment in which they learn. As a result, the learning environment is both shaped and is shaping the behaviour of students on a day to day basis. A healthy social and emotional school environment contributes to developing healthy social and emotional relationships and behaviour amongst the school community. This then creates a positive space for students to learn and grow, feeling safe, secure and having a sense of belonging.

The evaluation concludes that through the clubs, the project had contributed to improving the social and emotional interactions that students were having with themselves, with their peers, with their teachers and even with their parents. Through the Girls' Clubs in Ethiopia, girls learnt life skills, they learnt how to relate with their peers, that they were as good enough as boys and could achieve their highest potential, if they worked at it. They learnt how to define their personal space and stay focussed on the right things, set goals, manage their time and most importantly understand themselves as they develop and grow. It was observed that the girls were confident and were performing very well at school. Most of the schools indicated that girls were their top performers. Absenteeism and drop-out rates were also reported as having reduced. The boys were also now more respectful of the girls and teasing of girls especially during their menstrual period had reduced.

In Malawi, the MWML Clubs, provided a very useful platform for boys and girls to be demystified: - to one another and also amongst themselves. What were previously difficult topics, were now discussed with ease, challenges identified and resolved. Teachers reported that the girls were now very confident in the classroom and had a positive attitude about school. There were now very few cases of teenage pregnancy and where this happened, they were willing to return to school rather than dropout, because of the support they received through MWML club and the mother group.

2.4.2 Improved learning outcomes for all children through safe and effective schools?

As a result of the positive social environment, children were more confident coming to school. School enrolment had grown up to 40% in some schools as more were willing to come to school. Students reported that the school was enjoyable and teachers were more approachable and engaging.

Over 75% of the students reported that their grades had improved year on year, this was also corroborated by the reports by the teacher, where some teachers indicated that the performance of their class or grade had moved from an average of the 50% to the 70%. Some schools indicated that their performance had grown from a pass rate of the 60% to over 75% in grade 8 regional or national examinations.

Some schools reported having students who qualified to attend boarding secondary schools, which was a measure of having attained a good result in the grade 8 examinations. This was also observed by the evaluator on inspection of physical exam results records in the various schools visited.

Improved performance of the students was attributed to the successful implementation of ATL. ATL was so successful, that in Malawi for example, the DEM organised for teachers from schools that were struggling to visit schools where ATL trained teachers were confidently applying the methodology. This approach extended the reach of ATL beyond the project schools.

Investment in the construction of the Girls Changing Rooms, contributed to girls whose confidence grew; they reported to school during their menstrual period and as such absenteeism greatly reduced. Further because they were not missing school, girls started performing better in Malawi and Ethiopia. Majority of students who reported that their performance was above 75% were girls. Another feature that promoted the improvement of students' performance, was the boarding facilities. In Malawi where the project invested in facilitating the development of boarding facilities, the performance of students dramatically improved. In two such schools visited, all the students who had joined boarding succeeded, for the first time in the history of these schools, in qualifying to join district boarding secondary schools, following the grade 8 examinations. This is a powerful indicator of improved good performance.

Though the learning outcomes in most of the schools was reported to have improved, there were schools which reported that their performance had remained stagnant. Mwatibu in Malawi is one such school. The school has a student population of 2,500 students and over 1,000 students learn under trees because the classrooms are not enough. This particular example was a clear demonstration that the physical environment plays a very significant role in enabling better learning outcomes for the students.

2.4.3 Improved education system by effective partnerships between government and civil society organisations?

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, it was observed that there is a very strong and cordial relationship between the implementing partner of this project and the government as well as other stakeholders in the education sector. This effective partnership had gone a long way in supporting the achievement of some of the more critical results. For example, the Teachers Training Colleges in Malawi, have continued to provide advice and guidance to teachers on ATL in the schools where they have trainee teachers, alongside assessing their teachers in training. The same was found to also apply on the role played by the PEAs in Malawi and Cluster Supervisors in Ethiopia.

In both Malawi and Ethiopia, the District Education Managers played a leading role in the selection of the schools that participated in the project. The cluster system in Ethiopia, has meant that even though the project may have worked in one or 2 schools within a cluster, the Woreda Education representative ensures the cascading of the approaches to the other schools within the cluster. The same was reported by the District Education Manager in Malawi, where they organised the inter-school information sharing and knowledge exchange between project schools and non-project schools.

It was valuable that the project was building upon systems and principles that the government had started. For example, the learner centred approach was found to be a policy direction in both countries, though Ethiopia was further in its implementation than Malawi. The effective participation of parents was also a policy direction of the government and parent engagement structure like the PTA, SMC and Mother Group were established through policy in Malawi and the PTA in the case of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia had also identified the need to upscale the leadership and management capacity of head teachers to improve management in schools. As such the project was able to add value in the areas that government was already considering, and by doing so, provide what was considered relevant support, and created a foundation for sustainability.

2.4.4 What are unintended positive and negative outcomes of the programme and the supported projects?

Unintended Positive Outcomes

- In Malawi, the Mother Groups in two of the schools visited reported how they have conducted raids to rescue girls who were victims of early marriage. They were also creating awareness in the community through the MWML clubs on negative cultural practices. As a result, the incidence of negative cultural practices was reducing. In actual fact in the 2 areas mentioned, the chiefs had established a fine of several goats, which was collected from any family that attempted to marry off their underage daughter. The same was also reported in Ethiopia, where it was reported that because students had a safe place to discuss issues, they were able to report to the teachers through the girls' clubs when they were facing negative pressure from their families for early marriage, FGM or facing sexual abuse. The teachers would then take these matters up with the local authorities for further action. As a result of this, there was a reduction in negative cultural practices especially in the rural areas.
- Where a school was well managed, and organised they were able to attract additional investments from donors and other interested parties. One of the schools visited in Ethiopia, that has a very active PTA and head teacher, have put together a very comprehensive proposal for the improvement of their school. They have been able to raise USD40,000. But they have also been able to reach out to alumni from the school based in the diaspora who have committed to match the funds that they raise. This has been a collaborative effort driven by the PTA and supported by the head teacher.

Unintended Negative Outcomes

- It was observed that as the girl child was getting more and more attention, and thriving as a result. The boys seemed to be lagging behind and even struggling to keep up with the ensuing pressure. In the classroom, girls tended to answer most of the questions, volunteer to lead groups and make the presentations, while the boys tended to be a bit laid back, and unsure of themselves.



2.5 SUSTAINABILITY

The Start School Programme came to a close in 2019. At the time of the evaluation, some elements were observed in a very strong way, indicating that the project approach had resulted in some sustainable results. Some of this has already been alluded to in the section on effectiveness.

EVIDENCE OF HIGH SUSTAINABILITY

2.5.1 Active Teaching and Learning

The active teaching and learning methodology and benefits were evident in at least 90% of the schools visited in both countries. In Malawi, the 5 teachers who were trained in every school went back to their schools and through the CPD framework, trained the other teachers in their respective schools. This ensured that all teachers in participating schools had exposure to ATL.

Through the Interventions of the district education managers in Malawi, they were facilitating a process of information sharing between schools that had participated in the project and those that had not, where teachers who had been trained in ATL were going on information sharing trips to schools which had not been trained in ATL to share the lessons learnt. In Ethiopia, the cluster approach was a very effective approach for spreading the lessons learnt. At least one school in a cluster was part of the project. In most cases the participating school was the cluster lead. This school then was expected to cascade the lessons learnt to the other cluster schools, so whereas the project directly targeted 42 schools, 252 schools are exposed to ATL methodologies, through this cluster peer sharing.

The decision to integrate Teacher Training Colleges was also a key sustainability strategy. The CTEs/TTCs in Ethiopia and Malawi respectively had adopted elements of the BEQUIP ATL training provided by EEDF into their own curriculum. They were also assisting in assessing the performance of teachers trained, alongside assessing their trainee teachers in the schools that were part of the project. Because tutors from the CTEs/TTCs were part of the training as TOTs, they have the skills and knowledge to adopt the BEQUIP curriculum effectively into their own curriculum. ATL as a principle, is aligned to the government policy in both countries that is moving towards learner centred approaches to teaching. The decision to involve the government in selecting schools, in the training sessions, and even as ToTs, was key in building ownership for the project. It also has enabled them structure a process of scaling up this component to other schools through their own existing mechanisms.

2.5.2 SEL and CSE for the learners

- The clubs' approach has made it easy to integrate SEL and CSE into the education process in both countries. Clubs provide a student friendly engagement approach, that encourages the students to be participate and stay engaged. As much as the clubs are promoted by patrons who are teachers, they have a strong student led approach. Building ownership with beneficiaries of a project is very critical for promoting sustainability.
- The involvement of parents in the SEL and CSE agenda is key in promoting sustainability. In Malawi for example, the parents were involved in the MWML Club, through what was referred to as the Parents' Group. Here the parents were exposed to the same content their children were receiving in the clubs. Through the clubs, the parents and children organised community awareness events, where they could share this information with other members of the community. As a result, the knowledge and information spread beyond the boundaries of the school into the community. When more members of the community are aware and sensitized on these issues, there will be more sustained impact over the long term. In addition, parents had actually become activists for the girl child, by taking it upon themselves to champion the rights of the girl child. This they were doing in various ways including rescuing girls who had been married off by their parents whilst still in school; or negotiating with girls who had dropped out due to pregnancy to return to school after delivering their babies. All this was being driven by the parents themselves through their own initiative with no intervention from the project.

2.5.3 Effective Participation of Parents and Community

- The evaluation revealed that parents play a very critical role in supporting and driving quality performance of their schools. Where the parents were heavily involved and invested, the performance of the school was quite good, and the reverse was also true. This project indeed involved the parents through sensitizing them on their role, and in the case of Malawi they involved them in the MWML clubs. What was not evidenced through this evaluation, is a deliberate effort at ensuring continuity and scaling impact through a broad based awareness strategy on the role that parents and community play.

This was evidenced by the fact that in the schools visited where the parents' committees were newly constituted, they had no knowledge of the project, or of any training that had been provided to the previous committee members.

- However, despite this, the strategy to work through the existing parent structures was considered sustainable. In actual fact, the evaluation revealed, that the role and approach that parents take is something that can be passed on from one generation committee to the next, even without reference to the project. Committees tended to adopt the strategies employed by their predecessors. So, where there have been good and effective practises established by the previous committee, the new committee continued with the same.
- The close working relationship between the schools and government officials, had brought government closer to the parents.

As such, they were able to interact and lobby for issues that they felt the school was facing. This was evidenced through cases where the parents had lobbied for issues such as the transfer of a teacher who was a drunkard, or increase in the number of teachers amongst others. This close relationship, was giving them confidence to be more proactive in articulating their issues to government.

AREAS WHERE SUSTAINABILITY IS AT RISK

2.5.4 School Learning Environment

The school environment is very critical towards providing quality education. As has been mentioned previously, some modest investment was made in this domain. However, the sustainability of these investments cannot be guaranteed.

- In Malawi for example, where desks and chairs had been repaired, these were found to be broken and in a state of disrepair at the time of the evaluation. In one of the schools, a water tank had been repaired by the project, but was not functioning at the time of the evaluation; in another school, the solar lamps provided had stopped working because the school could not afford to replace the bulbs. The school environment investments were informed by the school improvement plan that is prepared by the school every year. The schools receive a grant from the Ministry, to support the implementation of the plan. The challenge that has been witnessed is that the grants are very small, and are supposed to cover learning materials and physical development. The schools therefore are forced to prioritise learning materials against physical infrastructure as the resources cannot cover everything. They have therefore been depending on development partners and NGOs to assist in financing physical development projects. Most of the donors on the other hand have not been focussing on physical infrastructure and as a result, this whole component is being neglected. It is therefore difficult to sustain any improvements that need to be made to the physical school environment, as there is no consistent maintenance.
- In Ethiopia, investment in the school environment took on a different approach, through the Student Led School Sanitation and Hygiene clubs (SLSSH). Sanitation and hygiene in schools was also being promoted by the government and was identified as a critical need. Every school was expected to have a pit latrine or toilet as is appropriate. Every home was also expected to have a pit latrine, and the government was running an awareness drive on this. As such this is evidently a critical issue. It was however observed that in most of the schools visited, water was a problem, even in the schools in Addis Ababa. The evaluators visited schools where the toilets were closed because there was no water. Janitors washed the toilets once a week, in all the rural schools visited, one of the reasons given was that there was not sufficient water to wash the toilets daily. Sanitation and hygiene interventions are usually complemented with water interventions because water is key in both of these. As a result, though there is awareness on sanitation and hygiene, the practise of it is hampered. This will have the eventual result of compromising behaviour change. To address this situation, the project could have included a component on rain water harvesting and storage to ensure that there would be water to sustain the other SLSSH components.

2.5.5 Effective Management by the Head Teachers and School Management Committees

As has been mentioned in the previous sections, the head teacher plays a very critical role in promoting quality education in a school. In actual fact, where the head teacher was strong and visionary, the other components of the project were being implemented successfully. It was however noted, that the head teacher was one of the actors who was getting very little follow-up support, hand holding and also there was no structured approach for scaling up the lessons learnt by the head teachers.

- Whereas there was regular monitoring of teachers through classroom observation, which was used to assist the teachers in refining their implementation of ATL, there was no structured approach for holding the hand the head teachers.

How to help them practically navigate difficult issues that they face on a day to day basis. As such, no one is quite monitoring if, head teachers are applying what they learnt and the challenges they face in doing so.

- Secondly, the teachers had a framework for sharing what they had learnt in ATL with other teachers, especially in Malawi. In both countries, the evaluation found that there was no mechanism in place for head teachers to share their management and leadership skills with head teachers from other schools. As such, when a very good head teacher is promoted or transferred, this was putting at risk, the progress achieved in that school through the project, because there was no guarantee that the new head teacher would uphold the same standards or management and leadership. This evaluation evidenced this situation in 2 schools visited in Malawi. This can be addressed by having the District Education offices organise peer learning and information sharing events for head teachers where they can share their knowledge with their colleagues.



3.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation concludes that the Star School Programme, was a well-designed and well thought-out programme that was very relevant in the countries where the evaluation was undertaken and achieved most of the desired objectives, it was implemented in a very efficient approach and the most of the results will be sustained for a long time to come. In actual sense, in Malawi the DEM for Lilongwe stated that Star School Programme is the best Education intervention he has ever experienced, he mentioned that there are other programmes by other actors promoting learner centred approaches, but none had achieved much because their approach was not appropriate and comprehensive.

The evaluation revealed that there are several major factors that have contributed to this success. The main ones identified include:

- The 5 domain approach, was a key factor of success. The evaluation identified that the 5 domains interact closely in promoting quality education, as such because this programme intervened in all 5 areas concurrently, it provided a comprehensive approach to the issue.
- The programme was building on what government was already doing, thus providing value add, during a transition process. As such, it was very relevant to both country contexts.
- Strategically partnering with the local government officials and CTEs/TTCs also went a long way in building country ownership for the project, supporting effective implementation and promoting efficiency and sustainability.
- The ATL and Management training was conducted using participatory and action learning approaches. As a result, the persons being trained fully owned their learning process
- The decision to use the clubs' approach for implementing the CSE and SEL component was an innovative and appropriate strategy that ensured that lessons were introduced in a friendly and open environment where parents could be involved.

Some challenges were however also identified that impacted on the achievement of results of the programme. The main ones include:

- Insufficient investment in the physical infrastructure component, thereby resulting in minimal achievement of results in the objective two on “promoting a safe and secure environment”.
- The parents’ component seems to have received little attention in approach and strategy compared to the other components.

The evaluation concludes that this project would achieve great impact if it could be expanded and scaled up further. This evaluation further makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation for Relevance:

The Quality Education Programme, has demonstrated both relevance and effectiveness, and has gained the support of government officials at local level in both countries. Edukans should leverage on the lessons learnt and expertise developed, to initiate policy level conversations, with a view to creating a sector wide approach coordinating framework. In such a framework, the actors will develop a common programme of action for promoting quality education, where they deploy resources and expertise according to their respective capacity and track record developed over time. They therefore streamline and scale up all initiatives geared towards improving quality education countrywide. As well ensure efficient resource allocation towards the various priorities.

Recommendations for Objective 1: The government could adopt the clubs as a complementing strategy for the life skills course that is offered in the curriculum. This will ensure that there is continuity, but also provide a value add for the government initiative on providing life skills.

Recommendations for Objective 2: The evaluation notes that infrastructure development is very capital intensive; considering that the needs for schools are very high and the resources available in this programme are limited, the programme should therefore consider partnering with others as well as exploring low cost, affordable construction options. Besides classrooms, boarding facilities for boys and girls have shown their worth, as the students who were able to board were performing better, due to better concentration and additional tutoring. Also housing of teachers in school or nearby was also identified as being useful. In the Mini Student Mobile Survey Report, students identified construction of teachers’ houses as a priority that they would consider if they were the head teacher. This is because when teachers lived close by, it increased their availability for the students especially for schools that are more difficult to access.

Recommendations for Objective 3: A real opportunity exists to scale up ATL as the default teaching approach in both countries. In both Ethiopia and Malawi that worked closely with the CTEs and TTCs respectively, a process of developing the adoption of BEQUIP into their Teacher Training Programme could be pursued so that it is mainstreamed into regular teacher training curriculum. Going to school and not learning is a wasted opportunity since going to school every day is not learning.

The evaluation recognised that the cascading approach employed in Malawi through the CPD in schools was very effective as well as the structure for cascading through the cluster school’s framework in Ethiopia. Both these approaches could be adopted together and deployed as a formal approach for cascading lessons learnt. This could be documented and a mechanism for monitoring developed and included as part of the project approach.

Recommendations for Objective 4: Support for head teachers: Develop a strategy to accompany head teachers as they return to their schools to roll out the trainings they receive and practise the new skills. This strategy should be integrated with the work/role of educational authorities and advisors. Additionally, this strategy should address any turnover of head teachers and their deputies when it arises.

Recommendations for Objective 5: Working with parents: the involvement of parents particularly in Malawi evolved organically and contributed to the success of some of the components of this programme. There is need to build on the existing community support at schools to continue promoting quality education. The lessons learnt from this programme on training and working with parents should be harnessed and documented into a manual on ways to build the capacity and increase the involvement of parents in the management of schools.

Recommendations for Objective 6: Expand partnerships: Explore higher levels of partnership with government to bring in additional funds or benefits to the project for example UNICEF Malawi has a school construction component i.e. Child-Friendly Schools Program an initiative to improve access and quality of education through construction of child-friendly spaces. The programme is implemented by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO), Association of Christian Educators in Malawi (ACEM), and Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), among others. A similar program the Malawi Education Sector Improvement Project is funded by World Bank through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Similar initiatives could be pursued in Ethiopia.

Recommendations for Efficiency

This programme has demonstrated that the 5 star model works; that all 5 areas together are critical for improving quality education. This evaluation has also revealed that there are areas where Edukans clearly excels and has demonstrated expertise such as ATL and therefore recommends to prioritise these initiatives in a next phase. Where Edukans has not excelled such as infrastructure development explore partnerships that can deliver on these objectives. Specialisation will ensure Edukans does not spread too thin on the ground and allocate resources efficiently.

Recommendations for Impact

Different countries registered varied success in the different components. This evaluation recommends, the different countries should be brought together to share best practise and lessons. The best practises in each country should be incorporated in the strategy for any subsequent phase. Some examples include the in-school cascading of ATL in Malawi through CPD; the inter-school cascading of ATL in Ethiopia through the cluster school framework; the girls changing rooms in Ethiopia; The Mother Group in Malawi amongst others.

Recommendations for Sustainability

Malawi are commended for developing age appropriate, culturally relevant manuals for the CSE and SEL curriculum and adapting them to the local context including language, familiar scenes and characters. This is a sustainability measure. The manual is an adapted user friendly, practical structure based on the daily life of Mangani and Tadala a boy and girl in Malawi. It teaches life's lessons through the eyes of these two students. The evaluation found that this was a more user friendly and age appropriate approach to developing CSE material. To further enhance sustainability, the programme should document how they work with parents and the parent's committees in the schools. Including the approach and the objectives. It should also include 'how to' take away notes for parents.

4.0 ANNEXES

Annex 1: Edukans Star Programme Evaluation Tor

Annex 2: List of Documents Review

Annex 3: Evaluation Tools

Annex 4: Mini Student Mobile Survey Report

Annex 5: List of People Interviewed

Annex 6: Gallery of Pictures