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ABSTRACT

In Malawi, adult literacy deserves immediate attention in order to promote health, family planning, and productivity. While policy commitment for adult literacy promotion has not been lacking, intensified action has been. In 1979 the government accepted the Unesco Mission Report to undertake a functional literacy program on the successful completion of the pilot project. More recently, in 1982, the Government of Malawi joined the Harare Conference and committed itself to elimination of illiteracy. Despite troubles in the installation of the Malawi functional literacy project, a National Board and a National Center for Literacy and Adult Education have been established. Although concrete possibilities of interagency linkages were explored, meaningful and sustained collaborations have yet to materialize. Content of the self-contained functional literacy curriculum is developed from themes most frequently mentioned in development literature and policy documents. A general paucity of training materials for use by trainers-supervisors or trainers of trainers has caused uneven training. The pilot project has established all the infrastructures the country needs; a clearly articulated and sustained national will is now required. (YLB)

ADULT LITERACY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IN MALAWI: AN ANALYSIS

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ADULT LITERACY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IN MALAWI: AN ANALYSIS*

As early as 1961, the manifesto of the Malawi Congress Party -- the party that has continued to lead Malawi since Independence in 1964 -- had promised an extensive program to wipe out illiteracy from the country (Honorable Kandawire, 1984). It was a bold promise for a country where the 1966 Census, a few years later, found 77.9 percent of its population of 15 years and over completely illiterate (Unesco, 1982); and where no more than one-half of the primary school age children may have been actually in school (Heyneman, 1980).

The Development Plan of 1962-65 for Malawi, did reflect the bold intentions of the Party manifesto in regard to literacy promotion. The materialization of intentions into actions was not, however, as daring. A National Literacy Meeting was held in 1962 that was chaired by the then Prime Minister, now the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda. In 1963, the Life President lent support to literacy work by personally awarding certificates to adults who had successfully completed a literacy program (Honorable Kandawire, 1984). Otherwise, literacy work languished during the plan period and during the many years that followed.

In 1965, Malawi was one of the countries chosen by Unesco for possible inclusion in UNDP/Unesco's Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) (Unesco, 1965). A Unesco Mission followed in 1966. Lack of matching government funds is said to have made Malawi's participation in the EWLP infeasible. One outcome of Unesco's 1966 mission may have been the setting up, in 1967, of a National Literacy Committee

to promote literacy initiatives, coordinate ongoing efforts and to review progress from time to time. The National Literacy Committee lasted into the early 1980s, when it was reconstituted into a National Board for Literacy and Adult Education. During the 15 years of its life, the National Literacy Committee had only a few meetings and little on its agenda in regard to coordination and review of literacy work in the country.

Another Unesco Mission visited Malawi in 1979. The 1979 Unesco Mission recommended, as indeed had the earlier mission of 1966, that the Government of Malawi implement a functional literacy pilot project to be later expanded into a nation-wide literacy program tied directly to the country's social and economic development plans (Husain, 1979). The Government of Malawi accepted the Unesco Mission's recommendations, including the commitment to launch a nation-wide literacy program on the successful completion of the pilot project.

The UNDP/Unesco/Malawi Functional Literacy Pilot Project (Unesco, 1981) has been in place since January 1981; and may be the only such pilot project in operation under the aegis of Unesco anywhere in the world today. This Functional Literacy Pilot Project came to Malawi at a most propitious moment. The EWLP was already part of world literacy history. Mistakes had been made and lessons had been learned from EWLP's experience of more than six years (1967-73) in eleven major experimental projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A critical assessment of the EWLP had been published (Unesco, 1976) which had systematically evaluated experiences gained in literacy policy, planning, organization, methodology, training and evaluation. Considerable additional work on adult literacy had been done outside the framework of EWLP. The th y and technology

of promoting literacy for development in the Third World had indeed become available (Bhola, 1982 b).

The Functional Literacy Pilot Project in Malawi has put the available intellectual inheritance to good use in its four years of operation from 1981 to the present -- much more so in conceptualizing and planning than in implementing. The new infrastructures as well as instructional materials have been fairly well tested in the context of a program that served some 20,000 adults. This is less than one per cent of the total of 2.5 million adult illiterates estimated to live in Malawi today, yet any long journey must begin with the first small step. Malawi is technically ready for the nation-wide literacy program that was recently approved to commence in 1986. What is needed is clear and sustained political will for the technology to bear fruit and for literacy to be put to work in the process of socio-economic development of Malawi.

A Theoretical Framework

It is necessary here to provide a theoretical framework to the analysis of literacy policy and performance in Malawi attempted later in the paper.

The discussion on the role of literacy in the development of individuals and societies continues. While the argument is by no means settled, a case in behalf of literacy can be made that is theoretically compelling. It is well understood that the role of literacy in the growth of individuals and the development of societies is not deterministic and need not be inherently positive, but that it is qualified by context. Irrespective of the context, however,

literacy is "potential added" to the new literate's individual capacity as producer and participant. Again, if literacy does not empower the new literate in relation to the power of structures and classes, it does atleast give the new literate independence in processing information in and about the environment, enabling the new literate to both codify and decodify information and experience. In a congenial social context where structural changes in behalf of the people are being undertaken as well, literacy can be made to play a historic role in the transformation of societies.

In an educational policy perspective, it is being realized more and more that the universalization of elementary education is necessary in its own right as well as for the ultimate eradication of illiteracy from among adult populations. The ultimate, however, is far away in most developing countries of the Third World. If the eradication of illiteracy is left to schools, most countries of the Third World will take anywhere from 50 to 100 years or more to achieve near-universal literacy in the total population. In the meantime, it will mean writing off several generations of adult men and women who have been and will, for many years, continue to be bypassed by the formal education system. Independent adult literacy policies and strategies are needed that are commensurate with the size and scope of the problem of illiteracy in the Third World.

Policy makers and planners in the Third World, confronted with the ever-present need to manage ever-present crises, often have to allocate resources to competing strategies of human resource development: for example, conducting a month long health campaign on radio. Or, they may resort to teaching literacy only to a few small and select

groups of workers in factories and on agricultural estates, justifying such programs for their direct and immediate usefulness. However, the professionalization of a small sector of labor need not be confused with the improvement of general population quality and the management of crises should not be equated with the making of development policy. In the overall, long-term and foresightful perspective of development policy, universal literacy assumes an inevitability: it is needed both for modernization and democratization (Bhola, 1982a; 1984). "No economically developed nation has attained that status without a near universal ability on the part of its general population to read, write and calculate " (Heyneman, 1980). Literacy may not be a sufficient condition, but it certainly is an absolutely necessary condition for development.

Expectations from adult literacy programs are high, and criteria and standards applied to measure success have been unreasonably stringent. Those same standards, if applied to other programs of education and extension, would jeopardize their existence if most had not already become the sacred cows of socio-economic planning. This is not to suggest that literacy work should be allowed to sink to the lowest possible level of efficiency and effective performance. A plea is being made for the understanding that adult literacy is a comparatively new enterprize; it is an enterprize of new roles and new institutional structures for the delivery of services; that adult literacy is a program with a crisis of identity -- it is not settled whether it is education or community development or part of a potpourri of social services; that adult literacy works with untrained people, offering voluntary service; it is always starved of resources; and it deals with non-captive groups whom it offers postponed rewards.

Malawi took some 25 years from its first promise of an extensive literacy program in the Party manifesto of 1961, to a second promise of a nation-wide literacy program to commence in 1986. In the meantime, with illiteracy figures of as much as 75 percent, Malawi still managed to feed its people and even to export food to its neighbors. The conclusion need not, however, be drawn that it does make sense to work on agricultural extension and let literacy wait. Social reality emerges from many factors in dialectical relationships. We should learn to ask policy analytic questions in the conditional tense: What would be the levels of attendance and performance of children in elementary schools, if their parents had been literate? What would be returns on Malawi's extension services, if they were dealing with literate farmers, workers and housewives?

The Setting

Malawi is a small land-locked country in Southeastern Africa, bordered by Tanzania to its East, Zambia to its West, and by Mozambique to its East, South and West. It is 45,483 square miles in area of which 10,000 square miles are covered by lakes. It is 520 miles long and varies in width from 50 miles to 130 miles. Because of the lack of infrastructures, the delivery of development services is by no means easy.

In mid-1982, the total population of Malawi was 6.5 million and growing at an annual rate of 2.6 percent. It is a comparatively young population with as much as 46 percent of the population below 15 years of age. The female population is slightly higher than the male population.

Malawi is one of the twenty-five least developed countries of the world, with a GNP per capita , in 1982, of US$ 210.00. Malawi's is

a capitalist economy, with big disparities in the distribution of incomes. In the year 1967-68, for which figures are available, the lowest 20 percent of households received 10.4 percent of the total household income, whereas the highest 20 percent received 50.6 percent of the total household income. Average annual economic growth rate during twenty-two years of 1960-82 was 2.6 percent whereas the average annual rate of inflation during twelve years of 1970-82 was 9.5 percent.

As much as 91.6 percent of Malawi's population lives in the country's 20,020 villages and is engaged in subsistence agriculture. Agriculture provides 50 percent of the GNP and 90 percent of the country's export commodities. Maize, groundnuts, tabacco, sugar, tea and cotton are grown as cash crops on some of Malawi's large privately owned agricultural estates. Mineral resources are few. Only some Bauxite is mined for export.

Country's health indicators fit into the pattern familiar for Third World countries. In 1980, there was one clinic for every 20,000 people and there were 1.4 hospital beds for every 1,000. There was one physician for every 40,950 and one nursing person for every 3,830 people. Infant mortality was 137 per thousand births -- the sixth highest in the World -- and life expectancy at birth was 44 years.

The Political Context

The particular geographical location of Malawi in Africa has thrust the country into the heart of Southern African politics. It is counted among the Frontline States in relation to the Republic of South Africa; and it is a member of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).

However, unlike other Frontline States in Southern Africa, Malawi has toed a delicate line in its political relations with the Apartheid regime of South Africa. In recognition of realpolitique and its own economic necessities, Malawi has refused to join with others in the chorus of condemnation of South Africa and has talked instead of "contact and dialog."

For this reason and some others, Malawi is by no means the darling of Western liberals. It is a political culture where, in the perennial tension between order and freedom, order has been preferred. Words and phrases such as the masses, political awareness, conscientization, egalitarianism and even democracy are not part of the daily political discourse. The State demands "Unity, Loyalty, Obedience and Discipline" so that political stability can be maintained and the basic economic needs of the people can be met first.

Malawi has grown up with its Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, and in every sense of the word is Dr. Banda's creation. Dr. Banda was summoned home from England to become the Prime Minister of Malawi, formerly Nyasaland, a British protectorate since 1881, and which became independent on July 6, 1964. First as Malawi's Prime Minister and, since 1971, as its Life President, Dr. Banda has kept a tight grip on the country, following a pragmatic ideology in behalf of his country-men, reminding them often that under Banda the people have seen peace and have prospered and they have not seen famine and hunger.

Malawi is peopled by six different tribes -- Chewa, Lomwe, Nyanja, Yao, Ngoni and Tumbuka -- all of Bantu origin. They all speak different languages. Chichewa is the national language and is understood

by 75 percent of the population. English, the official language, is understood by about 10 percent.

For administrative purposes, Malawi is divided into 3 regions (Northern, Central, and Southern) and 24 districts. For the effective management of agricultural development, the country has been carved into 8 ecologically homogeneous Agricultural Development Divisions (ADD's) and 178 Extension Planning Areas (EPA's).

Development Ideology and Policy Agenda

The development ideology and policy of Malawi can be best described as pragmatic and practical. Development planning is handled without the paraphernalia of a separate planning commission or a ministry of development planning; and without the benefit of a series of periodical planning documents. Planning is handled through the Economic Planning and Development Divisions of the Office of the President and Cabinet and statements on development policy are issued now and then. Projects of immediate need are designed and implemented to contribute to the overall develop of the country. In this situation of "planning by projects", integrity of development goals seems to be protected through the centralization of control of initiatives as well as through oversight of implementation by various ministries.

As indicated earlier, the language of policy enunciation itself is noteworthy. There are no inspired declarations in behalf of the people, no invitation to dialog and no promise of praxis. The language of development policy is cold, practical and business-like. The policy makers and planners themselves do not wear Dashiki's but come to their offices in three-piece business suits which is the official dress code.

The policy agenda is focussed on the improvement of the living standards of people and the whole development strategy is rooted in the classical economic assumption that Malawi's wealth lies in its land and its people. Agriculture is made central to the development process. The National Development Objectives as set out in the Statement of Development Policies, 1971-1980 were:

(a) To achieve an annual growth rate of 8 percent in GNP to be attained by directing a large part of public expenditures to the agricultural sector in support of agricultural production;

(b) To raise the living standard of the rural population with a view to reducing rural/urban income disparity;

(c) To achieve balanced development among the three regions; and

(d) To ensure greater Malawian participation in finance and management in the private sector (Malawi Government, 1971).

Since the mid-1970s, the going has been rough. In its recent Development Program for the Period 1984/85 — 1986/87, the development themes of the early 1970s reappear, though specific targets for economic growth have been revised downwards.

The Role of Education for Development in Malawi

Malawi's faith in formal education as an instrument of development can not be doubted. Lack of resources, however, have made appropriate actions impossible to take. In 1981, Malawi spent 11.1 percent of its total central government expenditure on education -- a reduction from the 1972 percentage of 15.8. This translates into inadequate school buildings and insufficient instructional materials; untrained teachers (of the 23,000 elementary school teachers needed by 1986, some 40 percent will lack requisite qualifications); low

enrollments (a net enrollment of 47 pe cent of the age group in elementary grades; some 4 percent in the secondary grades and less than 1 percent in higher education); and high dropout rates (of the 100 who enter first grade, 37 complete 5 years and 29 complete 8 years). Enrollments are even lower and dropout rates even higher for girls.

Education in Malawi requires both quantitative and qualitative change. It requires both expansion and planned renewal. There is no alternative to higher investments in the education sector; intensified efforts toward the universalization of elementary education; and renewal and expansion of secondary and higher education to meet the country's emerging development needs.

In the meantime, adult literacy deserves immediate attention to promote health, family planning and productivity of the people today.

Policy for Adult Literacy Promotion in Malawi

Policy commitment for adult literacy promotion in Malawi has not been lacking, it is intensified action that has been. In an earlier section, we made a reference to the Malawi Congress Party manifesto of 1961 which,among other things,promised a massive program for the total eradication of illiteracy from Malawi. Ten years later, the Statement of Development Policies, 1971-80 made a tame statement: "In view of the financial and other limitations, the scope for activity in the field of literacy is necessarily somewhat restricted and has a somewhat lower priority than the other activities of the Department of Community Development " (Malawi Government, 1971).

In 1979, as was pointed out earlier, the Government of Malawi accepted the Unesco Mission Report to undertake a functional literacy

pilot project during 1981-85, and committed to a nation-wide literacy program on the successful completion of the pilot project.

More recently, in June-July 1982, the Government of Malawi joined the Harare Conference of Ministers of Education and Those Responsible for Economic Planning in African Member States, organized by Unesco with the co-operation of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and committed itself "to eliminate illiteracy through a vigorous, sustained two-pronged campaign to universalize primary schooling for children and to promote literacy among young people and adults on a massive scale" (Unesco, 1983a).

Commitment exists at the operational level as well. During a visit to Malawi in September 1984, the author found that all ministries and departments of education and extension saw literacy as an important concomitant requisite for the effective delivery of development services nation-wide.

Literacy in Malawi: 1961-80

Malawi's experience with literacy during the twenty years since independence can be summed up as a bold manifesto with little by way of manifestation. Inspite of some personal interest shown by the Life President in the early 1960s, literacy never really got on the national development policy agenda. Unlike Tanzania nextdoor where first TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) and then CCM (Chama Cha Mapinduzi) took the leadership role in literacy promotion, the Malawi Congress Party did not succeed in making literacy promotion a program of significant proportion.

A few Kwacha schools (so called because learners had to pay a Kwacha a month for buying materials and paying the literacy teacher) did get started all over the country, but they were few and far between. During the years of 1968-78, no more than 1,303 such literacy centers may have been established and 17,525 learners enrolled in these centers. Out of those enrolled some 12,268 are known to have been declared literate.

From hindsight, it is clear why Kwacha schools did not proliferate and why adult literacy movement did not take root. First and foremost, it was the lack of clear policy direction and sustained planning. In the newly independent countries of the Third World -- except for a few notable exceptions -- development actions can not be left to decentralized voluntary initiatives from the people. Centralized policy direction seems necessary for self-help actions at the grassroots to germinate and to coalesce into national movements. A mix of centralized policy direction and decentralized implementation seems to be the only way to go at the present time and in the immediate future.

There were several other problems with Kwacha schools as those literacy centers were called. The content of literacy primers used in these centers seemed to have no relationship with the day-to-day problems of adult learners; teaching materials were in short supply; literacy teachers had had no orientation in how to teach adults and teaching methods were unsuited to the teaching of adult men and women. Fewer than 10 percent of the learners were men who seemed to have left it to their women to fill the few Kwacha schools that were being conducted.

No dependable records are avilable, but some Kwacha schools may still be in existence. Thus, there may be two literacy programs going

on concurrently in Malawi: the Kwacha schools; and the UNDP/Unesco Functional Literacy Pilot Project.

UNDP/Unesco/Malawi Functional Literacy Pilot Project: A Profile

The Unesco Mission of May 26 to August 31, 1979 made a comprehensive survey of literacy in Malawi during the years 1961-79, and made a persuasive case for the role of literacy in the development of Malawi (Husain, 1979). Somewhat predictably, the Mission report recommended that the Government of Malawi undertake a pilot project using the "functional literacy" approach with the expectation of using the pilot project as a transition into a nation-wide literacy program in support of development in Malawi.

Functional literacy, according to the Unesco definition (Unesco, 1965), is a method of training for development, rooted in the social psychology of man at work. In a functional literacy program, the functional content and the literacy content should be so fully integrated that the learner should be unable to separate the learning of economic function from learning reading and writing.

Consequently, the functional literacy program in Malawi would be built on the following assumptions:

(1) Literacy is not an end in itself, but has a meaning only as a component of larger programs of development composed by physical as well as educational inputs;

(2) A program of functional literacy has to help the farmer and his family in life and work, modification of individual values and intensification of community action, and in understanding and using complex technologies;

(3) Rural adults involved in improved farming practices would be interested in literacy if it comes to them as a part of their agricultural betterment and increased income and improved family living; and

(4) Functional literacy curriculum is a composite one including reading, writing, numeracy, socio-economic knowledge and agricultural know-how (The Project, 1982).

Two Phases of the Pilot Project

The Pilot Project was planned in two phases. During the first phase of 18 months (and which actually lasted from February 1981 to August 1983), the project would (i) establish policy making and planning mechanisms required for the implementation of the project; (ii) bring about inter-agency linkages with other departments of extension and education for collaborative action in the field; (iii) design curricula, make methodological choices, and produce instructional materials after appropriate needs assessment; (iv) establish a system for the delivery of literacy services in three clusters of villages in three districts, one district each in the three regions of the country; (v) train central staff, and staff in the districts -- project officers, supervisor-trainers, and literacy instructors -- to implement the pilot phase of the project; and (vi) establish an evaluation unit to undertake an evaluation of the pilot project experience.

During the second phase (from August 1983 to December 1985), the mechanisms of policy making and planning already established would be strengthened. The organization for administration, training, materials production, field work and evaluation would be expanded from 3 to 8 districts to implement a functional literacy program covering, in about three years of the second phase, 50,000 learners taught in 2,300 learning centers, supervised by 115 supervisor-trainers.

Most significantly, the design for a literacy program, to be expanded to all the 24 districts of the country, would be made ready based on the experience of the pilot project.

To provide leadership in the early phases of the pilot project, and required technical assistance throughout the project's life, Unesco would provide three experts: a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA), expert in planning and programming; a specialist in training in literacy and adult education; and a specialist in literacy and adult education curriculum. Two associate experts were also to be made available -- one in training and another in evaluation.

Unesco, in behalf of UNDP, committed and spent in the neighborhood of one million US dollars on the pilot project, a large part of it going into salaries of experts and staff. Unicef spent another one million US dollars, most of it on development and production of instructional materials, classroom supplies and honoraria for literacy instructors. The Canadian Organization for Development through Education supplied some 200,000 dollars worth of printing paper and the German Foundation for International Development made some training inputs into the project. The Malawi Government input may have been in the neighborhood of half a miilion Malawi Kwacnas (some 400,000 US dollars in current value).

Structures for Policy Making and Planning

Institution building is a difficult task under the best of conditions. In the context of technical assistance in the Third World, it can be extremely slow and most frustrating.

The Malawi project seems to have had its share of troubles in the process of installation. The first CTA lasted only a year.

The Training Specialist on the project was then appointed CTA and asked to hold both charges of planner and trainer. Only one of the two associate experts could be recruited. Fortunately for the project, the new CTA was fully conversent with the Unesco approach to functional literacy in all its aspects and came with considerable practical experience of conducting functional literacy programs in his home country.

On April 29, 1983, the National Board for Literacy and Adult Education was formally and legally constituted with membership from the ministries of community development, education and culture, agriculture and natural resources, health, youth, local government; economic planning division of the Office of the President and Cabinet; information department and Malawi Broadcasting Corporation;and the University of Malawi. The Board would be the main organ for providing policy guidance initially to the pilot project and later to the nation-wide literacy program to commence in 1986. A sub-committee of the Board is already working on the question of standards for literacy and certification for possible entry into the formal system.

A National Center for Literacy and Adult Education has also been established to serve as the Board's operational arm. The Center is supposed to be a "National Resource Center for Literacy" in planning, training, curriculum development, instructional materials design and delivery, supervision and evaluation -- complete with production facilities for print and graphic materials and a documentation center. A small national staff to handle initial work in planning, materials production, training and evaluation was hired. A separate building is planned to house the Center.

Coordination of Instruction and Social Mobilization

Inter-agency linkages are essential for the successful implementation of a functional literacy program and indeed for any program of literacy for development. Linkages with all relevant agencies of extension and education must be established -- both horizontally and vertically -- and kept operational to be able to integrate literacy with functional knowledge. On the other hand, the organization for literacy must interface with voluntary organizations of people which can help in the mobilization for recruitment of both learners and teachers.

The Malawi Literacy Project prepared an excellent blueprint for the integration of literacy work with functional knowledge and for social mobilization (The Project, 1982a). Concrete possibilities of linkages, for instance, with Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Culture, the University of Malawi and many others were explored and the tasks to be shared were listed for review by all members of the network envisaged. Meaningful and sustained collaborations have yet to materialize however, which points to the extreme difficulty of implementing inter-agency collaborative actions in general.

Indeed, problems of coordinated actions seem to exist right within the parent department of the literacy project. The Department of Community Services within which the literacy program is located does not seem to have integrated literacy within its structures of administration, training and delivery of services. Community development work and literacy work seem to flow in two different streams. Outside the area of community development, integration of functions even with some of the show-case programs such as the 22 Model Primary Schools and Adult Education Centers and the 11 Rural Growth Centers have yet to materialize in a meaningful way.

The country's broadcasting media seem to provide little support in instruction or motivation of learners, but this may change during the phase of expansion. A monthly newspaper, Boma Lathu is distributed free to all learner groups who request. That is perhaps all by way of inter-agency collaborations.

We are beginning to understand that motivations of learners to learn and of teachers to volunteer to teach are seldom spontaneous. Mobilization is necessary for obtaining participation. In Malawi as well, the functional literacy project has sought to involve local people. The existing development committees have been encouraged to establish sub-committees for conducting literacy work. Village Literacy Committees have been set up in the three project areas: Karonga (within ADD Karonga, Northern Region), Salima (within ADD Salima, Central Region), and Chikwawa (within ADD Ngabu, Southern Region).

Within the context of the pilot project, mobilization of learners seems unnecessary. There are more learners than places in the learner centers -- a situation unique to Malawi. This may change in the expansion phase.

Organization for Delivery in the Field

In the three pilot districts, the District Community Development Officer (DCDO) has been redesignated as District Project Officer who is thus the kingpin in the organization for the delivery of literacy in the district. The DCDO in each district works under the District Commissioner and with political guidance from the District Development Council. The DCDO is expected to establish linkages at the district level with his or her counterparts in other departments of extension and education included in the network of collaboration envisaged by the National Center for Literacy and Adult Education.

The DCDO as Project Officer looks after all community development work in the district and is in charge of the literacy project. To assist him in literacy work, he is given an Assistant DCDO responsible for literacy work alone. Each district is given 3 to 5 Community Development Assistants (CDA's) who act as trainers-supervisors -- first training literacy instructors in their areas and then supervising their work. A CDA typically supervises 30 to 40 literacy centers working out of the district headquarter. The CDA is expected to work with all the village literacy committees in his area (most CDA's are males though most learners are females) and are expected to coordinate instructional inputs from all other extension workers in the localities.

Literacy instructors are identified by local authorities and leaders, typically, from within the communities. They work part-time, teaching separate groups of men and women, between 15 to 25 learners per group. To qualify to teach they must have finished VIII grade of primary school and have good knowledge of Chichewa (the language of literacy) and of English (the language of administration and training). They are paid a small honorarium of 10 Malawian Kwachas (about US$7.50) a month for working with each group.

As already indicated, village literacy committees are constituted from local development committees, with a membership of four to six persons including a chairperson and a secretary. Since there are more learners than places in pilot project areas, village literacy committees help literacy instructors and supervisors make appropriate selections of learners instead of having to mobilize a large enough number of people to participate. They also bring to the attention of literacy instructors the special curricular needs of learners in their communities and help with problems of logistics, supplies and of personal relationships, if such problems should arise.

Functional Literacy Curriculum

The curriculum has been carefully designed. Content is developed from themes most frequently mentioned in development literature and policy documents. Methodologies of instructional design and teaching of language reflect state-of-the art knowledge.

The functional literacy curriculum is more or less self-contained. If no other members in the network of collaboration make any instructional inputs, the curriculum will still have an integrity and will still teach reading and writing in the context of development. At least some development themes would have been discussed and some basic economic, social and health knowledge would have been taught. While the curriculum is self-contained, it does provide various nodes and points for connecting with various on-going extension programs in the field by the very choice of development content included in the two primers. For the time being, there is one curriculum for use all over the country, though diversification is planned for later on in the program.

The two primers are the essential vehicles of the curriculum to be taught in two cycles: the first cycle of 6 months and the second cycle of 4 months.

The first primer Chuma ndi Moyo (Wealth and Health) consists of 35 lessons and use such theme sentences as farming is money; make ridges in the field early; care for your gardens; buy hybrid seeds; use fertilizers; weed your crops early; protect crops from pests; store your harvest well; protect your livestock; sell your maize to Admarc; budgeting money helps us in farming; disease detards children's growth; children grow well in a clean surrounding; snails found in water cause bilharzia; if children fall ill, one should seek help from the hospital immediately; let us cut the grass around our houses to prevent diseases; parents should agree

to build a school on a self-help basis; let us get balanced diet; save at the post office; let us learn how to sew our children's clothes; teach your young good behavior; we should remember to worship God daily; how to write a letter; and preparing a balance sheet to account for our money.

All lessons follow the same pattern, now familiar for functional literacy primers. A key theme is introduced in a short sentence which is accompanied with an illustration. The theme is discussed in class in terms of learners' experiences in their own lives. New knowledge or attitudes are introduced. In this process of discussion, a word or two are learned as sight words. The word learned as sight word is broken into syllables (all Bantu languages are syllabic languages) and syllables then are broken into alphabets. From analysis, learners go to synthesis. Alphabets are combined into new syllables; and syllables are combined into new words. The mysteries of reading and writing are thus removed from the very first days in class.

Numbers are introduced from the third lession onwards in the first primer. The first 13 lessons have been reproduced in large-size charts for group reading in learner groups. Flashcards are also available for the first 13 lessons to help in drill work. The first primer is supposed to be finished in 6 months requiring some 200 instructional hours.

The second primer, Tigwane Nzeru (Let's Share Knowledge) has 51 lessons, meant to be covered in 100 hours spread over 4 months. The primer continues to deal with such development themes as agriculture, poutry farming, health and cleanliness and nutrition and introduces functional uses of numeracy. This second primer, thus, seeks to prepare learners to be able to read follow up literature on their own.

The two primers, it is claimed, do help learners become fluent readers of Chichewa materials issued by various development agencies for farmers. It had been hoped that literacy classes would be able to have visits from extension workers for lectures and demonstrations once every week of classes, some 40 hours in ten months, but this has not materialized.

Post-Literacy Materials Production. The project has anticipated problems of relapse into illiteracy if new literates do not continue to make frequent and functional uses of their newly acquired literacy skills. Plans are afoot for the production of post-literacy materials and easy-to-read booklets on development topics are being written in workshops being organized with the assistance of German Foundation for International Development.

Training of Functionaries

The Malawi Project has been faced with an important challenge in the area of training of funtionaries. All the training resources of the country, in the University of Malawi and elsewhere, had to be coordinated and the training of implementers had to be conducted in the process of implementation itself.

At the policy making and planning level at the center, training was handled mostly in part-counterpart relationships between Unesco experts and local administrators and programmers -- not always to the full satisfaction of local professionals who found Unesco experts self-indulgent and training idiosyncratic. At the district level, the Project Officers were trained on the job, and were also sent to some short-term workshops dealing with planning and evaluation. Little was done by way of providing orientation to extension workers in other departments who were supposed to collaborate with the project.

The training of literacy instructors was to be conducted in three week seminars, followed by one-day orientation every month when volunteers came to the district headquarter to collect their MK 10 honorarium. For lack of resources, the three-week training has sometimes been reduced to two weeks; and the orientation on pay day has not always worked. The training seminars, separate for men and women, and conducted by area trainers-supervisors with some help from the Center in Lilongwe, cover the following topics: introduction to literacy (2%); organization and structure of literacy in Malawi (5%); curriculum for functional literacy (5%) how to teach adults (2%); role of the instructor (5%); use of the primer and learning materials (59%); class organization (2%); creating a favorable literacy climate (17%); and self-learning by teachers (3%). Most of this training content is repeated in The Teacher's Guide for Chuma Ndi Moyo, consisting of three sections: I: Organization of the classes; II: How to teach the lessons; and III: Instructions for teaching individual lessons.

The supervisor's training has three main components: how to train literacy instructors; how to supervise literacy work; and how to get the administrative and technical support necessary for the implementation of the program on the ground. The supervisor's training generally lasts one week [redacted] and is conducted by the staff from the National Center. The Center staff, other than the Unesco experts, do not always feel confident about conducting training for trainers-supervisors because they lack field experience . Trainers-supervisors often feel unsure about training literacy instructors because they have never before conducted literacy classes for adults themselves.

There is a general paucity of training materials and manuals for use by trainers-supervisors or by trainers of trainers. Since training of literacy instructors is left to trainers-supervisors in the area, the training must be uneven in effect.

The first nine CDA's were trained as trainers-supervisors--three each for Karonga, Salima and Chikwawa pilot areas -- in a mini pilot project conducted in 8 villages in the vicinity of Lilongwe in order to field-test curriculum materials. This mini pilot covered 115 male and 366 female learners in 19 classes, and lasted during August 1981 to February 1982. Since that time, the project trained 80 trainers-supervisors and 230 literacy instructors for the first phase of the project and has had a target of 300 trainers and 1,000 literacy instructors for the second phase of the project.

The Teaching-Learning System

The realities of teaching literacy in the African bush would dismay anyone who is long on expectations and short on patience and perspective. The sympathetic will find something inspirational seeing adult men and women sitting under trees in front of a chalkboard struggling with their primers or with unsteady hands making words or sentences on their slates -- expanding their knowledge, their skills and their world.

In Malawi, men and women meet in separate classes. There are 90 females for every 10 males in classes. About two-thirds of all teachers are women. Classes meet 4 days a week, for 2 hours each day. Classes must register at least 15 learners and no more than 25. Youth and adults of 15 years and over are invited to join, but younger children are not turned away if they show up. Each learner is given a set of instructional materials free of charge.

The first primer uses the global method of literacy, each lesson built around a development theme. Discussion of the development theme is an important part of the learning strategy, but discussion is not always easy to conduct. Teachers do not feel confident with technical content and learners are often shy. Traditional teacher-learner roles predominate except that women come to classes with children at their backs and breasts.

A lesson may take anywhere from one to three days. One day in a week is set aside for each class to invite a local extension worker to make functional-technical inputs -- this would add up to 40 or more hours of functional knowledge, if extension workers did indeed come to teach throughout the 10 month cycle.

Learners see little of the trainer-supervisor either. The supervisor has to supervise 30 to 40 learner groups spread over a large area and is one of the ten or more people at the headquarters wanting to use the only motorbike available to them. When the supervisor does come in, he seldom stays for the night and is unable to [illegible] much with members of the village literacy committee.

In a village visited by the author in 1984, 90 adults had applied for admission into two literacy classes one for men and one for women. Two classes of 25 were started. According to the supervisor, 5-6 adults had dropped out after two to three months; another 5-6 before the second cycle was completed. Of the 15 who had remained to complete the full cycle of ten months, he expected 5 to be fully literate, another 5 to be semi-literate and the last 5 to need more work. It should be instructive to compare these figures with figures for dropouts in Malawi's elementary schools: of the 100 who join the first year, 37 complete the 5th grade, and 28 complete the 8th grade.

The learners yet persevere and hope. Those who learn to read in Chichewa, want to learn to read in English. About 10 per cent of those in classes want to work towards a Primary Education Certificate.

Extent of Coverage

Functional literacy pilot projects should not be judged by coverage alone. Before adults can be brought into learner groups to learn to read and write and to acquire functional skills, organizational infrastructures and instructional systems have to be built and training materials have to be designed and produced. Yet a project on which some 2.5 million US dollars have been spent in five years of its life, must show respectable coverage by way of services delivered to adult learners.

The mini pilot project that was organized during August 1981 to February 1982 to test instructional materials taught 481 adults in 19 learning centers. During the first phase of the project, the highest number was 4,350 adults enrolled in 215 centers. A report issued by the project in 1984 reported 12,840 learners in 600 learner centers in the three districts where work was begun in the first phase. Targets mentioned for the year 1985 are 115 trainers-supervisors, 2,300 literacy teachers and 50,000 learners in 8 districts.

It is not clear as to how many of those enrolled actually graduated out of the program and how many of those now enrolled will become literate and when. The coverage for the expansion phase 1986-1990 is as follows:

Please see table on next page.

Year	Functional Literacy Centers	Number of Learners	Cumulative Number of FL Centers	Cumulative Number of Learners
1986	10,000	250,000	10,000	250,000
1987	15,000	375,000	25,000	625,000
1988	20,000	500,000	45,000	1,125,000
1989	20,000	500,00	65,000	1,625,000
1990	15,000	375,000	80,000	2,000,000

The costs are estimated to be somewhere in the vicinity of 30 million Malawi Kwacha, at the rate of MK15.00 per adult made literate. A provision of MK 6,000,000 has been made. Where does the rest come from?

While some resources will be required both from internal and external resources, the problem of resource generation takes a different complexion if the literacy program is reconceptualized as a popular program and if the Malawi Congress Party and the **Young Malawi Pioneers** are asked to play a role in the eradication of illiteracy from the country. There are already 45,000 Young Malawi Pioneers in the country, and some 2,000 (most of them literate) are trained as Pioneers every year. If every one Young Malawi Pioneer taught 60 learners in one or two years, the problem of illiteracy would disappear. Rewards given to the Pioneers do not always have to be economic rewards.

Evaluation of the Project

One of the objectives of the first phase of the UNDP/Unesco/Malawi Functional Literacy Project was to establish an evaluation unit within the project. A one-man evaluation unit was indeed established in 1982, and a Unesco associate expert available to the project for training

was deployed on evaluation. The national evaluation officer was trained in evaluation planning and evaluation methods in a series of four 2-week workshops conducted by the German Foundation for International Development in the region. The evaluation officer used the opportunity to develop a Management Information System for the project which is now in the process of installation and is by no means operational. The first 800 literacy tests sent for administration to learners in the Ngabu area had not been returned by September 1984, and there were several problems with the flow of data from the field to the headquarters. In the meantime, the evaluation officer got transferred to Salima as District Project Officer.

Conclusions

Malawi has waited long for the eradication of illiteracy; it should not have. Through Unesco's influence, it accepted to work with a pilot project. Through the influence of its neighbors perhaps, Malawi went to Harare and committed to the total eradication of illiteracy (Unesco, 1983). Plans have been made for a nation-wide literacy program during 1986-90; but these plans may not be implemented. An understanding of the role of literacy in development exists among educators and development specialists, even among the officials in the Treasury. There is experience in economic management which can be brought to bear on the organization of a nation-wide literacy program. The pilot project has established all the infrastructures the country needs. The only thing now needed is clearly articulated, and sustained national will.

NOTES

* Data and documentation for this paper were collected by the author during two visits to Malawi during June 3-14, 1984 and August 26 to September 7, 1984. Additional information came from Unesco, UNDP, UNICEF and World Bank sources.

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