

Objectives of the 2002 Malawi DHS EdData Survey

The principal aim of the 2002 Malawi DHS EdData Survey (MDES) is to provide up-to-date information on education among children of primary school age (age 6-13). The survey focuses on factors influencing household decisions about children's school attendance. These data supplement the data collected by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology by focusing on attendance rather than enrolment and exploring the costs of schooling (monetary and non-monetary) and parent/guardian attitudes about schooling. The survey provides data on topics such as the age of children's first school attendance and dropout; the reasons for overage first-time enrolment in school, never enrolling in school, and dropout; the frequency of and reasons for pupil absenteeism; household expenditures on schooling and other contributions to schooling; distances and travel times to schools; and parent/guardian perceptions of school quality and the benefits and disadvantages of schooling.

The 2002 MDES was designed to supplement education data sources and to provide data to assist policy-makers in evaluating education programmes in the country. In broad terms, the 2002 MDES aims to—

- Provide baseline data on key education indicators
- Assist in the evaluation of Malawi's education programmes
- Advance survey methodology in Malawi and contribute to national and international databases.

In more specific terms, the 2002 MDES was designed to—

- Provide data on the schooling status of Malawian children of primary school age and on factors influencing whether children ever enrol in school and why pupils drop out of school
- Quantify household expenditures on children's schooling and examine differential patterns of expenditure by various background characteristics
- Measure parent/guardian attitudes about schooling—including their perceptions of the quality of schooling and of the effects of Free Primary Education—to provide an understanding of attitudes that shape parents' and guardians' willingness to send their children to school
- Measure the frequency of pupil absenteeism and the reasons for missing school in order to suggest approaches to maximise pupil attendance.

Organization of the Survey

The 2002 Malawi DHS EdData Survey was a comprehensive survey that involved several agencies. The National Statistical Office (NSO) had the primary responsibility for conducting the survey in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). Model survey instruments were modified by NSO in consultation with a number of agencies, including the MoEST, the Center for Educational Research and Training (CERT), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Malawi), the Department for International Development (DfID/Malawi), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA/Malawi), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). ORC Macro provided technical assistance for the 2002 MDES, and funding was provided by USAID, DfID, and CIDA. Funding for the overall DHS EdData Activity, including the development of the core survey instruments, is provided by the USAID Office of Education in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade.

The 2002 MDES and the 2000 Malawi DHS

Often, the DHS EdData survey is linked to a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) conducted in the same country. The DHS survey is designed to provide current and reliable information on key indicators of social development, including fertility levels and trends, family planning knowledge and use, and maternal and child health. The most recent DHS in Malawi was conducted from July through November 2000. When the DHS survey and the DHS EdData survey are linked in a country, households sampled for the DHS survey are revisited and in-depth information on education is collected. For each household, data from the two surveys are statistically linked to create a joint data set that provides information on a wide range of topics.

Typically, a DHS EdData survey begins fieldwork within a month or two of the completion of the DHS survey to maximise the chances of locating and interviewing the same households interviewed for the DHS survey and to increase the likelihood that the household characteristics (such as composition and wealth) are unchanged during the period of both surveys. However, in Malawi, there was a 17-month gap between the end of the fieldwork for the 2000 Malawi DHS and the start of fieldwork for the 2002 MDES. Because of this gap, the 2000 Malawi DHS households were not revisited for the 2002 MDES. However, as discussed below, the sampling frame used for the 2000 Malawi DHS—which was based on enumeration areas defined in the 1998 Malawi Census of Population and Housing—was used to structure the sampling frame for the 2002 MDES.