

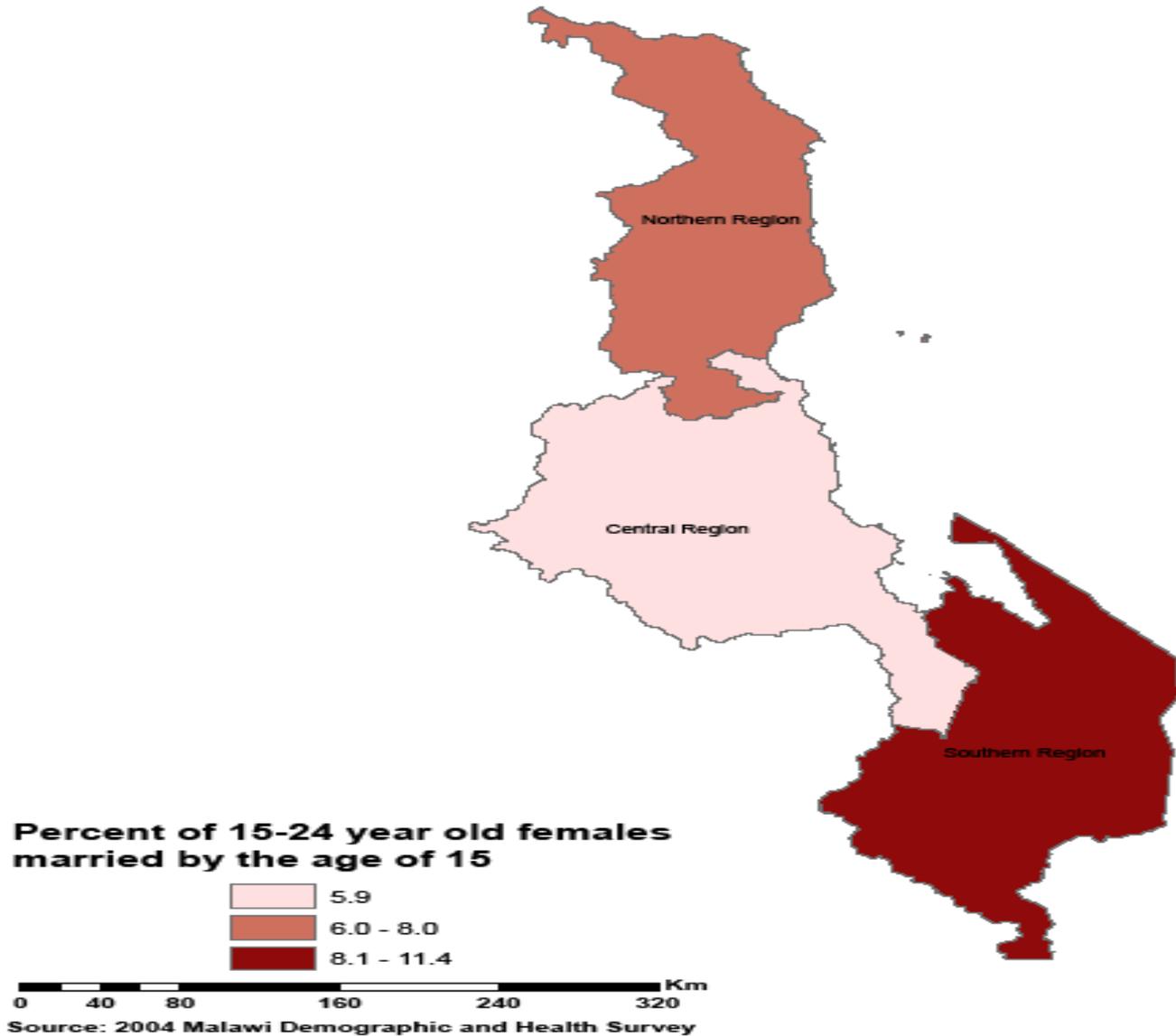
# The situation of Girls In Malawi: A Brief

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# BASIC FACTS ABOUT MALAWI

- Malawi is a Small and Landlocked but densely population
- 1998 census puts the population at 9.9 million (49% males and 51% females)
- Population growth rate of 2.0% (Down from 3.7% in 1987).
- Malawi is ranked at number 163 out of the 173 countries based on the United Nations Human Development Index and has the 4th lowest GDP per capita in the world at US \$586 million per annum.
- According to Integrated household survey 2004/05, 52.4% of the population lives below the poverty line.
- This translates into about 6.3 million Malawians who are poor, with the poorest people in the southern region, and in rural areas.
- The poor also have poor socio economic indicators with food insecurity and HIV/AIDS being a continuing threat to leading a better life
- The Poverty Vulnerability Assessment for 2006 suggests that the major factors affecting the level of household poverty are: household size, education, access to non farm employment, access to irrigation, proximity to markets and trading centers, and access to tarmac roads.
- Nearly 8 in 10 Malawian adolescents aged 12–19\* live in rural areas.
- There are marked differences between the three regions in accesses to school, literacy rates and on many other indicators and the South lags behind on many social indicators.

# Regional Differences



# Formal Education

- Formal Educational system follows a 8-4-4-tier system for primary, secondary and university.
- Primary is 8 years, secondary 4 years and University 4-5 depending of course.
- It can be estimated that pre-primary or Nursery education is provided at 5% level.
- Recent assessments reveal that Malawi may not be able to achieve any of the MGD and EFA goals.

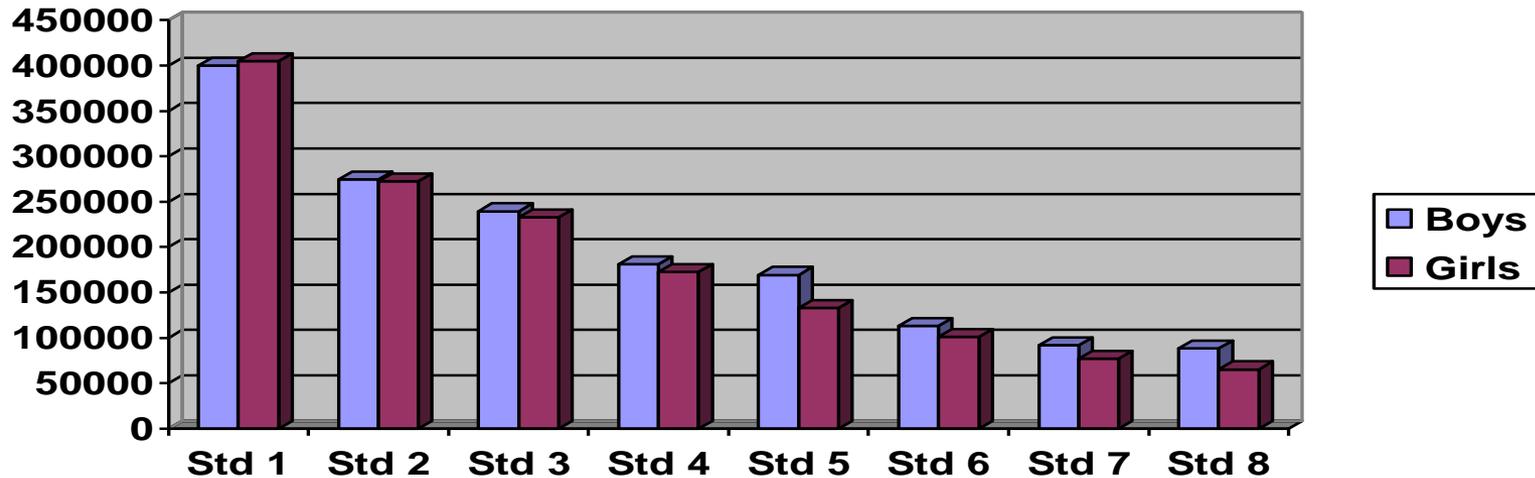
## Major Problems of Formal Schooling

- a) **Low enrolment rate:** Net Enrolments account for approximately 85% of the school going age group;
- b) **High drop-out rate:** Half of all the children who start school, leave before they complete four years and only a quarter complete the eight years of primary schooling;
- c) **High repetition rate:** Repeaters account for approximately 20% of standard one and 25% in standard eight;
- d) **Over-age enrollments:** Half the Standard 1 enrolments are over eight years of age through the entry age is 6 years and pupils with ages of 20 and over are not uncommon in the other standards;
- e) **Under representation of girls** - Especially after Std 4 although the number of boys and girls is almost the same when they start standard one;
- f) **Regional disparities:** Some districts are over-enrolled while others are under-enrolled.
- g) **Resources Levels-** The teaching learning environment leaves a lot to be desired (SACMEQ).
- h) **Cross-cutting issues:** Such as HIV/AIDS and Poverty

# Effects Continued

- Malawi education system has a very weak holding capacity

Figure 1 Enrolment by Std and Sex (1999)



# ***Adolescents and Early marriage/pregnancy***

- The problem of early marriage and pregnancy in Malawi is big. Of the 171572 pupils who had dropout in 2007, 10037 (5.9%) did so because of marriage and a further 3350 (1.4%) because of pregnancy making a total of 7.8%
- At one school in Kasungu (CARE Malawi) four Standard 4 girls got pregnant
- One in three adolescents' girls has begun childbearing while one in four has already had a child and a further 9% are currently pregnant.
- There is a substantial difference in childbearing among teenagers who live in urban and rural areas (25% compared with 36% respectively).
- At the regional level, the proportion of teenagers who have started childbearing is highest in the Southern Region at 40% compared with the Northern Region at 33% and the Central Region 28 percent.
- In one district called Mangochi in the southern region, which is a lakeshore district, they have the highest proportion of teenagers who have started childbearing at 48% while the capital city of Lilongwe has the lowest at 25 %.
- Nearly one third of the females aged 15-19 get married before they get to 20 years of age while for males more than 95% are still single.
- HIV/AIDS prevalence data show that 15–24-year-olds have the highest rates of new HIV infection, with adolescent girls considerably more likely to be infected than adolescent boys

# Fact about Adolescent Girls (cont.)

- 42.4% of dropout are because of family responsibilities and a further 5.6% because of employment.- child labour problems
- 60% of girls either have a baby or have been pregnant by age 19
- 15% of women age 15-24 and 14% of men age 15-24 have had sex by age 15
- Women start getting infection at a young age than men
- According to the 2004 DHS, HIV prevalence among women is higher in the Southern Region (20%) than in the North (10%) or Central (7%) Regions.
- The education strategic plan for HIV/AIDS makes the observation that “*data disaggregated by age and gender show that more females are infected between ages 15 and 29, whereas more males are infected in the 30 and above age groups.*”
- Traditional attitudes and practices lay emphasis on preparing girls for marriage and sexual partnership more than their economic and development abilities. The traditional attitudes and practices therefore have led to the problem of low participation of girls in development activities. Girls tend to be further marginalized and among the many problems that they face, early marriage is one of the biggest problems.

# six key areas for girls' participation in development activities (**Maluwa-Banda, D., and Lunguzi, J.M., (2002)**)

- Low participation of girls in development activities, with only 30% of girls, rating their participation in youth activities as “high”.
- Low education attainment for girls, with drop –out rates of up to 20% and repetition rates of up to 48% in lower primary school levels.
- Poor sexual and reproductive health status of girls with majority of adolescent girls knowing friends who had become pregnant during their teenage years.
- Lack of vocational skills training for girls, with only 29% having experienced formal training in vocational trades.
- Low socio-economic status of women.
- The income- generating activities available to adolescent girls were of a small scale and included selling pan cakes, sugar canes, bananas, and produce from gardens

# What are the Implications for Adolescent Girls?

- All this points to the fact that adolescents in Malawi are particularly a vulnerable group which needs special attention by both policy makers as well as program/project implementers
  - To empower married adolescent girls economically
  - To Increase access to education
  - To increase knowledge of reproductive health services
  - To support the use of reproductive health services, among married adolescent girls
  - To increase social networks
  - Introduce measures to curb child labour
  - To reduce the incidence of teenage motherhood

# In Relation to the MDGs

- The Focus is to address the needs of adolescent in an effort to try to respond to the issues raised in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy and hence the millennium development goals.
  - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger- by empowering them
  - Achieve UPE- educate mother educate nation, eradicate child labour and reduce teenage pregnancy
  - Promote gender equality and empower women
  - Reduce child mortality
  - Improve maternal health
  - Combat HIV and malaria