

School experience

# Theme 6: Supporting learning and transitions

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Teaching assistant handbook



Forum for African Women  
Educationalists in Malawi  
(FAWEMA)

*"Supporting Girls and Women to  
Acquire Education for  
Development"*



The Open  
University



Keeping Girls in School scholarship programme  
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# 'Keeping Girls in School' Scholarship Programme

## School Experience Year 2 Handbook

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# Theme 6: Supporting learning and transitions

## Introduction

Welcome to the final Theme of the 'Keeping Girls in School (KGIS)', Malawi Access to Teaching Scholarship Programme. You should feel very proud of your achievements so far, but there is still some work to do this term.

In Theme 6 'Supporting learning and transitions', you will work with the teacher in your class, your Mentor, the other Teaching Assistants and the rest of the school to support the learners in Standard 8, particularly the girls, in preparing for examinations and the transition to secondary school. You have already been through this process yourself, so your experiences will be very valuable to the learners in your school.

The first two units of this Theme look at different Learning Areas and extra-curricular activities and include examples of how you can encourage girls to participate in these areas.

Part of the transition to secondary school are the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) examinations learners need to take at the end of primary school. Unit 3 in this Theme provides examples of how you can support the learners to prepare for these examinations.

Unit 4 looks at issues for girls making the transition to secondary school. You have personal experience of sitting exams, so work with the teacher in your Teaching Assistant role and use this experience to help the learners. Remember that you also have some guidance on revision and study in the MSCE pack for the KGIS programme. It is for secondary school, but you might be able to adapt some suggestions to use in primary school.

Unit 5 is the final unit in the KGIS programme. In this unit, you will review your learning and update your Personal Statement. You will be asked to return to and review the aims you set yourself in Theme 4, at the beginning of this second year in the KGIS programme. The final task you will be doing in the KGIS programme will be to review the Personal Statement you wrote and write a new one to update all your achievements and learning over the two years in the KGIS programme.

In all your conversations with your Mentor and other Teaching Assistants, remember to discuss how you are acting as positive role models for girls in school, and how you can encourage them to stay in school till the end of term.

Here is the overview of Theme 6 for year 2:

<b>Theme 6: Supporting learning and transitions</b>	
<b>Unit 1</b>	Supporting girls' learning across the curriculum
<b>Unit 2</b>	Extra-curricular activities: opportunities for girls to learn
<b>Unit 3</b>	Working for success in examinations
<b>Unit 4</b>	Making the transition to secondary school
<b>Unit 5</b>	Review your learning and update your Personal Statement

### School Experience Diary

In your School Experience Handbook for Theme 6 there are special 'Diary' pages for you to keep a record of what you do each week in the classroom and the school. You can write about your thoughts and ideas, and things that happen. You can add any notes about your Mentor meetings.

When you write in your School Experience Diary, think about the four areas of support that you, as a Teaching Assistant, provide: support for the teacher, support for the curriculum, support for learners and support for the school.

You can choose to write a little every day, or write longer sections at the end of each week.

Week 1: Week beginning on:.....

<b>Monday</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Friday</b>

**Week 2: Week beginning on:.....**

<b>Monday</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Friday</b>



Week 3: Week beginning on:.....

<div>Monday</div>
<div>Tuesday</div>
<div>Wednesday</div>
<div>Thursday</div>
<div>Friday</div>

**Week 4: Week beginning on:.....**

<b>Monday</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>
<b>Thursday</b>
<b>Friday</b>

Week 5: Week beginning on:.....

<div>Monday</div>
<div>Tuesday</div>
<div>Wednesday</div>
<div>Thursday</div>
<div>Friday</div>

**Week 6: Week beginning on:.....**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

Week 7: Week beginning on:.....

<div>Monday</div>
<div>Tuesday</div>
<div>Wednesday</div>
<div>Thursday</div>
<div>Friday</div>

**Week 8: Week beginning on:.....**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**

Week 9: Week beginning on:.....

<div>Monday</div>
<div>Tuesday</div>
<div>Wednesday</div>
<div>Thursday</div>
<div>Friday</div>

**Week 10: Week beginning on:.....**

**Monday**

**Tuesday**

**Wednesday**

**Thursday**

**Friday**



# Unit 1: Supporting girls' learning across the curriculum

## Introduction

In this unit you will learn about local resources and activities to support learning in Social and Environmental Sciences. In this Learning Area, learners use their skills in mathematics and literacy. The topics often require learners to collect and analyse information.

This is a big Learning Area. It is about many important issues that affect our lives today. The topics include:

- Gender equality
- Health and HIV and AIDS
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Drug and substance abuse
- Justice and human rights

and

- Water, forest and fish resources
- Malawian industries
- The Malawi Constitution
- Our country and culture

What do these topics mean to you? Did you study any of these when you were in primary school? Are these topics too difficult and complicated for children to understand?

We do not think so. Many children in Malawi know about HIV and AIDS. Many children have the sad experience of the death of a mother, father or other relatives. Girls can have experiences of inequality at home and in society.

Children in their daily lives see how natural resources are used. They watch their mothers and fathers sowing seeds, growing crops, farming, collecting water, fishing and weaving. Children see animals and babies being born. They know about the rainy season and the dry season, and how weather affects travel, school and agriculture.

We cannot cover everything in this Learning Area within this two-week unit. However, in this unit, you will do some research (search for information). You can search for information in a book or on the internet, by asking a person, using a library or other office, or by making your own observations.

The practical activity in this unit is for you to work with another Teaching Assistant or a group of Teaching Assistants to:

- choose one Social and Environmental Sciences topic which you are interested in, and
- find some information about this topic.

By sharing your experiences outside the school with girls you can act as a role model to them and they can learn from you.

To be a good role model and Teaching Assistant, you do not need to know the answer to every question. But knowing how to search for answers to the questions children ask – or to questions you may have yourself – is a very useful skill.

### **When you complete this unit you will have developed:**

- Knowledge and understanding of locally available resources to support learning in Social and Environmental Sciences
- Skills in using local resources to find information
- Skills in planning and managing your study time

### **Vocabulary in this unit:**

In this unit you may find many unfamiliar words. Underline these words so that you can find out what they mean. We encourage you to have a dictionary. Is there one you can use regularly in school or at the Teacher Development Centre?

### **Timing**

You have two study weeks to complete the activities in this unit. Skim read the unit now, to learn what you must do.

### **Study reading 1: Education leads to better health**

Read the passage below, from the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education for All (2011). Underline any words you do not know. Ask your teacher or Mentor to explain these words, or use a dictionary, so that you really understand the passage.

*“The education of girls and women can lead to a wide range of benefits – from improved maternal health, reduced infant mortality and fertility rates to increased prevention against HIV and AIDS.*

*More educated mothers are more likely to know that HIV can be transmitted by breastfeeding, and that the risk of mother-to-child transmission can be reduced by taking drugs during pregnancy. In Malawi, 60% of mothers with secondary education or higher were aware that treatment could reduce HIV transmission risks, compared with 27% of women with no education.”*

Now read the real-life example below.

### Real-life example 1: Standard 7 does research on HIV and AIDS

Mr Josephus asked Standard 7 learners what they knew about HIV and AIDS. Many learners had misconceptions such as:

- HIV and AIDS are caused by witchcraft
- old people cannot get HIV or AIDS
- sex just once with an infected person is not risky
- having sex with a mentally retarded person cures AIDS
- HIV and AIDS is a disease for rich people.

When Mr Josephus heard learners saying things like this, he was worried about their health and their future. He sent the Teaching Assistant Maria to the local health clinic, to ask for information about HIV and AIDS. The clinic gave Maria some small posters, leaflets and small books.

Mr Josephus organized the class into eight groups. Each group had eight learners. He gave each group a different leaflet or small book or poster about HIV and AIDS prevention. Each group had to underline any words they did not know, and look in a dictionary to find out the meaning of the words. Maria helped two groups of learners to find the meaning of words. Mr Josephus went to each group and told them to explain to him what they had been reading.

After this, he had groups take turns to report what they had read to the whole class. Later in the week, the groups made posters about what they found out and displayed them in the school. Maria helped a group of girls perform a play to the school about what they had learned about HIV and AIDS prevention.

After doing this work, the learners could talk with knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

Are Mr Josephus and Maria acting as role models?

Mr Josephus and Maria used local information from the health clinic to teach the learners in an active way. The learners had to read the information for themselves, and then they had to explain it to others. This is a good way to learn and to revise.

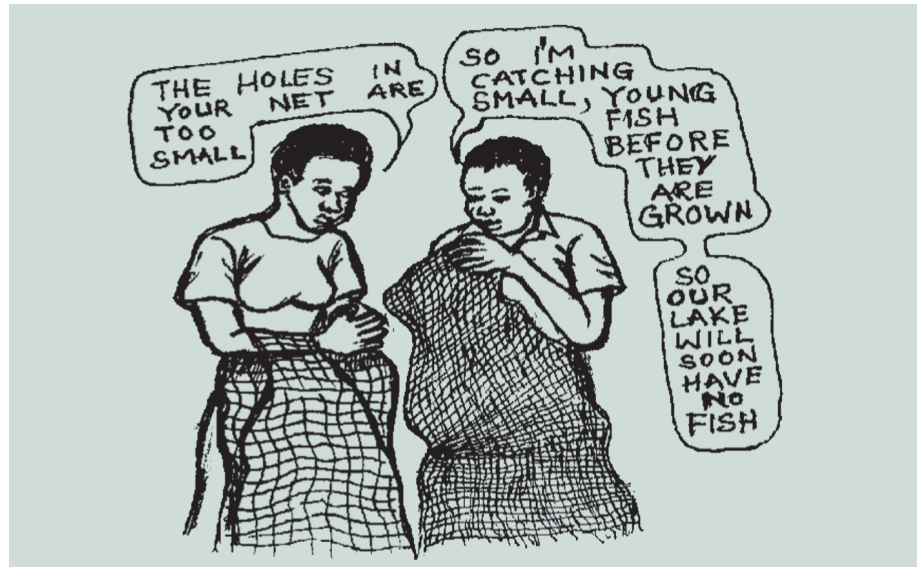
### Study reading 2: Natural resources

Natural resources are not resources made by people; they are things found in nature that are necessary or useful to humans. Examples of natural resources are:

- water
- air
- land
- animals
- fish
- trees
- plants.

Land is a habitat for people, animals, trees, plants and crops. Water is a habitat for fish. Land provides materials for industries – such as wood for furniture and

homes. Soil also provides materials – such as clay and sand for the building industry. Water is needed by people and animals and gives life to crops. Natural resources are important to individuals, families, communities and the nation. Poor management and misuse of natural resources leads to their depletion and even their extinction – this is when something disappears forever.



*Over fishing leads to the depletion of fish*

There are also human resources. These are personal, family and community resources, such as people's knowledge, education, experience, skills, time and labour. We can use our human resources to protect natural resources.

Now read the real-life example below.

### Real-life example 2: Finding out about local trees

Miss Chirambo wanted her Standard 8 learners to feel responsibility for protecting the natural environment. She took the learners outside to look at the trees around the school. The children could see different kinds of trees, but they did not know the names of some of them.

So Miss Chirambo invited Mr Iphani to the school. He is a respected village elder who worked in the Dondo Hills Forest Reserve near Ntchisi, a special government area dedicated to protecting trees and habitats. Miss Chirambo asked him to talk to the learners about the trees.

Mr Iphani told the learners that Malawi has a lot of forest resources, but that sometimes people do not look after the forests. He told the learners: "You must protect the trees so that they can be used by future generations."

Miss Chirambo and Mr Iphani asked the children to tell them how trees are used. The children gave the following answers:

- firewood for heating and cooking
- charcoal for cooking
- shelter for homes
- keeping food and animals
- wood for furniture, buildings and houses

Remember to write in the School Experience Diary.

What did I do this week?

- they give us fruits
- they give us shade from the sun
- they give us protection from the wind
- they are a home for birds and other animals.

Mr Iphani told the learners that trees are also very important because they protect the soil from disappearing – when there are no trees, the rain washes away the soil and the land loses its fertility. This is called 'erosion' and no crops can grow. He also explained that many traditional medicines come from trees. For example, sap from the bark of the fig tree can be applied to ringworm on the skin, and the oil from the Neem tree can be used to cure malaria.

Miss Chirambo told the learners that paper is made from trees. The children were surprised to learn that newspapers, textbooks, magazines and writing paper all come from trees.

Mr Iphani told the learners the names of some indigenous, native trees to Malawi: naphini, chitimbe, mkuyu, muwanga, m'bawa and msuku, muyombo, mlombwa and kachere. He said these trees were disappearing and being replaced with non-native, exotic trees which do not normally grow in Malawi: trees such as blue gum, pine, jacaranda and cinderella. He explained that 'non-native' trees means those are brought into Malawi from other countries.

Miss Chirambo and Mr Iphani took the learners around the school. They said the name of each tree, and told the children some information about it. In the classroom, Miss Chirambo made a large chart and the learners started to put the information into the chart.

How is Miss Chirambo acting as a role model?

Name of tree	Non-native or indigenous?	How we use it
Mlambe (baobab)	Indigenous	Fruits Fruit juice Bark fibre for making rope Stem for firewood
Blue gum	Non-native	Timber for construction

As you can see from this real-life example, Miss Chirambo used a human resource in the community – Mr Iphani – to teach the learners about a natural resource – the trees. They organized the information into a table so they could review it and remember it well.

**Practical activity: Research a question on one topic**

For this activity, you should work with another Teaching Assistant or in a group of three to five Teaching Assistants.

With another Teaching Assistant or in the group, choose ONE topic from this list:

- Gender equality
- Health and HIV and AIDS
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- Drug and substance abuse
- Justice and human rights

Or choose ONE topic from this list:

- Water resources
- Forest resources
- Fish resources
- Malawian industries
- The Malawi Constitution
- Our country and culture

For the topic that you choose, you will ask a question and then find some information to answer your question. Make time to discuss this with the other Teaching Assistants, so that you can agree on what you will do.

Here are two examples.

Jayne is a Teaching Assistant in Ntchisi. She worked with three other Teaching Assistants to choose a topic and a question about it. Then they thought about how they could find some information to answer their question.

**Our topic:** Gender equality

**Our question:** When did women get the right to vote in Malawi?

**How we will try to find out:** Textbooks at a secondary school, textbooks in the local library and the TDC. People we can ask: the secondary school Social and Environmental Sciences teacher, village headmen, respected elders and our older female relatives.

Tiwonge is a Teaching Assistant in Dedza. She worked with her class teacher, her Mentor and one other Teaching Assistant to choose a topic and a question about it.

**Our topic:** Forest resources

**Our question:** Why are there so many exotic eucalyptus trees around the primary school?

**How we will try to find out:** We can ask village elders if they remember different trees, such as the native naphini. We will ask what they remember and what happened to the old trees. We can look at textbooks in the secondary school to find out about when the eucalyptus trees first came to Malawi, and to find out why they were introduced into Malawi.

You will have different topics and questions. Choose topics and questions that interest you. Remember to keep your questions simple – you cannot find out everything in a short time. Think about the information resources around you. Talk together about how you will share the task of finding the answer to your question. Discuss your ideas with your Mentor.

Write your topic, your question, and how you will try to find some answers here:

**Our topic:**

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**Our question:**

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**How we will try to find out:**

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Think of all the ways you could find information to answer your question. You could:

- look in textbooks
- ask a knowledgeable person (head teacher, class teacher, MSCE Tutor, Mentor, someone in your community or in your family)
- look in the secondary school or the TDC
- ask for information in a local clinic, newspaper or office
- look in a library or – if you have the opportunity – on the internet.

Use your study time to do this research. At the end of the two study weeks, write what you have found out here:

Remember to include one or two examples of how you are being a role model to girls in your class or in school.



## Review

Social and Environmental Sciences is a big Learning Area. We cannot know everything about so many topics. But we can learn how to search for answers to questions – where we can look and who we can ask.

The ability to ask questions and do research is an important study skill. The ability to look for information can also help us find answers to children's questions. We should use all of the information resources that are available to us – material resources and human resources.

## To finish this unit

Well done! You have carried out a small research project in this unit. You have used local information resources for your own learning and knowledge. These information resources may have been printed study materials and textbooks, or they may have been human resources – the knowledge, education, skills and experiences of people. As a Teaching Assistant, through the work you have done in this unit, you have developed important skills to help the teacher and learners in your class.

### Teaching Assistant's report and self-assessment

### Mentor comments and evaluation

This image shows a full page of handwriting practice paper. It features multiple sets of horizontal blue dashed lines spaced evenly down the page, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text present.

Signed (by Scholar)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (by Mentor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sources for text/quotations and images

Page 154

Key Messages and Data on Girls' and Women's Education and Literacy

UNESCO – April 2012, p3

Page 156

Over fishing leads to the depletion of fish

Malawi Primary Education Social Studies Booklet

# Unit 2: Extra-curricular activities: opportunities for girls to learn

## Introduction

In this unit we will look at extra-curricular activities and the Learning Area of Expressive Arts.

Extra-curricular activities usually take place outside the school's regular timetable. They can include sports activities, clubs (such as debating club), and arts activities (such as singing, drama or weaving).

It is important that all learners, including those with special needs, participate in extra-curricular activities because they help to develop different physical and mental skills. Most of the activities use resources that can be obtained locally. Some people develop career choices from extra-curricular activities.

Expressive Arts sometimes take the form of extra-curricular activities. It is a big Learning Area – like Social and Environmental Sciences (Unit 1). The topics include:

- Music
- Dance
- Drama
- Poetry
- Literature
- Painting
- Traditional spinning and weaving
- Wood carving
- Sewing
- Physical education (games, sports, athletics etc.)

Using your skills you can act as a positive role model to girls. Encourage girls in your class to use their own skills and take part in expressive arts activities.

This is a Learning Area that children naturally enjoy. Expressive Arts can be fun! They give learners opportunities to move around, play, be creative and use their imaginations.

When you help in the primary school, it can be enjoyable to watch learners taking part in extra-curricular activities and in Expressive Arts, and it can be fun for you to join in! When you join in – when you are animated and demonstrating that you are having fun doing the activities – the sessions will be more exciting for the learners.

Don't forget to complete your School Experience Diary page for each week that the unit lasts.

## When you complete this unit you will have developed:

- Knowledge and understanding of locally available resources to support learning in Social and Environmental Sciences
- Skills in using local resources to find information
- Skills in planning and managing your study time

### In this unit you will read the following terms:

**Integrated learning:** learning in one subject that naturally leads to learning in other subjects.

You may find other unfamiliar words and phrases in this unit. Underline these words so that you can find out what they mean. We encourage you to have a dictionary. Is there one you can use regularly in school or at the Teacher Development Centre?

### Timing

You have two weeks to complete the reading and the activities in this unit. Skim read the unit now, so that you know what to do.

### *Practical activity 1: Child-friendly learning activities*

Look at this photograph of young learners dancing. What do you think they are learning in this dance activity?



Do you think this could be an extra-curricular activity, or part of a lesson?

Remember when you learned last year about Child Friendly Schools in Theme 2. We think this photograph shows a child-friendly learning activity. The learners are enjoying the dance. They are concentrating on what they are doing. They are using their creativity. They are developing their physical abilities. They are learning about music, movement and rhythm. They are learning about their Malawian culture. They are also learning co-operation. Expressive Arts and extra-curricular activities give opportunities for this kind of integrated learning.

In some activities there are no right or wrong answers – for example, when learners use their imaginations to draw. In other activities there are rules – for example, some traditional Malawian dances have specific movements and games and sports have rules for playing.

When young learners arrive in school, many of them already have knowledge of these types of activities. Their mothers may have taught them traditional dances and songs. Their fathers may have taught them how to carve and how to play some sports. Their older brothers and sisters may have told them poems and stories.

Have you seen activities in your placement school that you think are child-friendly?

## Real-life example 1: A childhood experience of music, dance and drumming

Read these memories by a university student, Grant Macloly Moloko Nthala. As you read, think about your own childhood and youth experiences of music and dance.

*“As a general Malawian tradition, my parents ensured that we visited our village once every year in order to see grandparents, uncles, and other relatives. My parents wanted us to appreciate our cultural heritage and learn Chewa cultural values.*

*These village visits exposed me to many Chewa dance performances. During each visit, I witnessed at least one gulewamkulu performance in my father’s village and one in my mother’s village, which are less than one kilometre apart. Sometimes, these performances took place in other nearby villages, and I heard their night drumming echoing through our compound.*

*I often went to the village in the dry season, and every visit coincided with gulewamkulu festivals and wedding ceremonies. I attended all wedding ceremonies that took place near our village together with my elder brother and our cousins. In all these weddings, there were chimtali and mganda performances.*

*As I grew up, I realized that there were chimtali dancers both in my father’s and my mother’s villages. Both villages formed mganda groups. I enjoyed watching my cousins perform in these dances, and I became interested in learning mganda. Together with my brother, I forced myself to dance behind the dancers whenever they were invited to perform. We were discouraged and criticized for spoiling their performances, but we became stubborn and accompanied the dancing group from my mother’s village everywhere they went to perform. Eventually, the group allowed us to accompany them on several trips and to rehearse with them, but from our own line at the back of the dancers. During these trips, I witnessed different kinds of mganda and chimtali dances from our district and from surrounding districts.*

*Apart from my experiences of Chewa dances in our village, I had an inclination towards cultural music and dance from youth. One way this inclination manifested itself was through my keen listening to a radio programme called Nyimbo Za M’maboma (‘Music from the Districts’) that ran on state radio Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) between 2.03 pm and 2.45 pm every Monday to Friday. The programme played cultural music of different Malawian ethnic groups from different districts. Another cultural music programme that was aired on MBC was Music of the People, an English programme that not only played Malawi’s cultural music, but described its origin, its setting, and its style.*

*Through both radio programmes I developed a strong interest in the Chewa dance music that I was already familiar with, and other Chewa music that I had not experienced in my home district. Both experiences gave me a wider understanding of the Chewa music traditions and the Chewa art of drumming.”*

Is there a particular female role model you remember from your childhood? Think about why you remember her? Share this with the learners in your class and encourage them to think about their own role models.

Now answer these questions:

When you were a child, what did you learn about music and dance?

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Did you learn these things from your family, from people in your village, or from the radio, or a mixture of these?

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Do you think Grant’s story is a good example of integrated learning? His learning combines music, dance, technology (the radio), communication, language, geography, history and Malawian culture.

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Did Grant learn about music and dance in school, or outside school?

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Remember to write in the School Experience Diary.

What did I do this week?





### Real-life example 2: Storytelling

Village Headman Kokokolo and other elders in Dedza district lamented about how the youth of today are not interested in remaining in the community and becoming village leaders in the future. They feared a loss of culture and values and wanted to see this restored. They discussed their fears and decided to take action.

The Village Headman recognized that he had a role to play to improve the quality of education. He saw that a local school had very few teachers. Often he would see the learners playing in the school grounds and not attending classes.

The Village Headman went to talk to the head teacher. He asked the head teacher if he could help the school to return to the days of storytelling. The head teacher agreed to the Chief's idea.

Now the Village Headman and other parents come regularly to the school. They share proverbs and traditional stories that give important messages and tell the community's history. The stories bring to life many topics about Malawi and Africa. One story they tell is as follows:

#### **Mutu wodwala Kansire, anatema Kadzidzi**

This is a story about Kansire – a small bird, like a swallow – and Kadzidzi the owl. One day Kansire was suffering from a terrible headache. A healer was called to come to the Bird Village to give medicine to Kansire. To cure the headache, the healer would need to make a few incisions in Kansire's head and put the medicine in.

But the healer was in a big hurry. When he came to the Bird Village he did not ask who was sick. He saw Kadzidzi sleeping – because owls always sleep during the day and hunt at night. He thought: "This must be the bird with the terrible headache – I can see this bird has a very big head from the headache and the sickness has made him sleepy." Much to the surprise of Kadzidzi, the healer made cuts in his head and put the medicine in.

The lesson of this story is – always ask for information before you take action, and do not work on assumptions.

The story also tells which birds we can find in the forest, what they look like, and when they hunt.

The learners are interested in the stories, histories and proverbs. They remember the stories well. They now show greater respect for school, and show more interest in the community. There is also less vandalism in the school because people from the community come into the building and feel proud of their participation in children's learning.

### ***Practical activity 2: Rhymes and songs***

Ask one group of learners to choose their favourite rhyme or song. Ask them to say it, or to sing it. Watch the learners as they do this. Then:

1. Write the words of the rhyme or the song on the chalkboard or a big piece of paper.
2. Read the words of the rhyme or song aloud with the learners.
3. Do this several times.
4. Point out letters, words and punctuation (capital letters, full stops, question marks).
5. Decide on movements or actions to do while singing the song or saying the rhyme.
6. Perform these actions while singing the song or saying the rhyme again.
7. Ask the learners to take it in turns to perform for each other in pairs or groups.



Have the group perform the rhyme or song to the whole class.

After you have done this activity, think about the integrated learning: literacy, language, music and movement.

Ask your teacher if you can plan to do this activity with other groups of learners, so that everyone in the class has a chance to do it. If each group does a different song or rhyme, then groups can perform for each other.

## Study reading 1: Drawing for learning

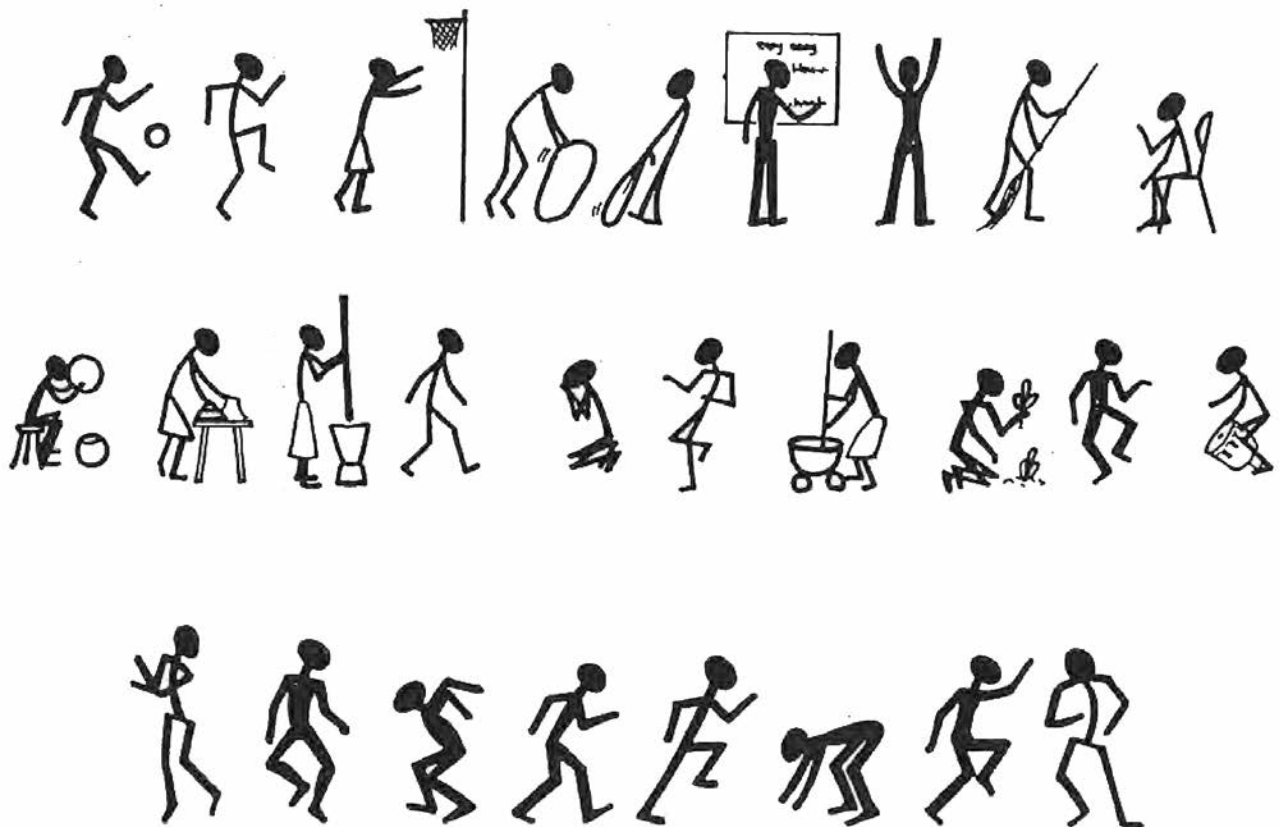
Everyone can draw. Some of us are more experienced at drawing than others.

Drawing is the organization of lines and shapes. When you draw, you use your knowledge of mathematics: you make lines that are vertical, horizontal and curved. You use shapes such as circles, ovals, triangles and squares. This is an example of integrated learning: the expressive art of drawing and mathematics.

Drawing anything step-by-step simplifies the process. Human figures can be basically made up of three ovals, two curved lines and some lines for the limbs. The basic shapes are:

- head – small oval
- chest – a big oval
- hips – a small oval
- neck – curved lines
- spine – long lines
- foot – a triangle.

When you help in the classroom, you can draw simple figures on the chalkboard to illustrate what the teacher is saying. This kind of simple drawing can make things very clear to learners.



*Simple Action figures*

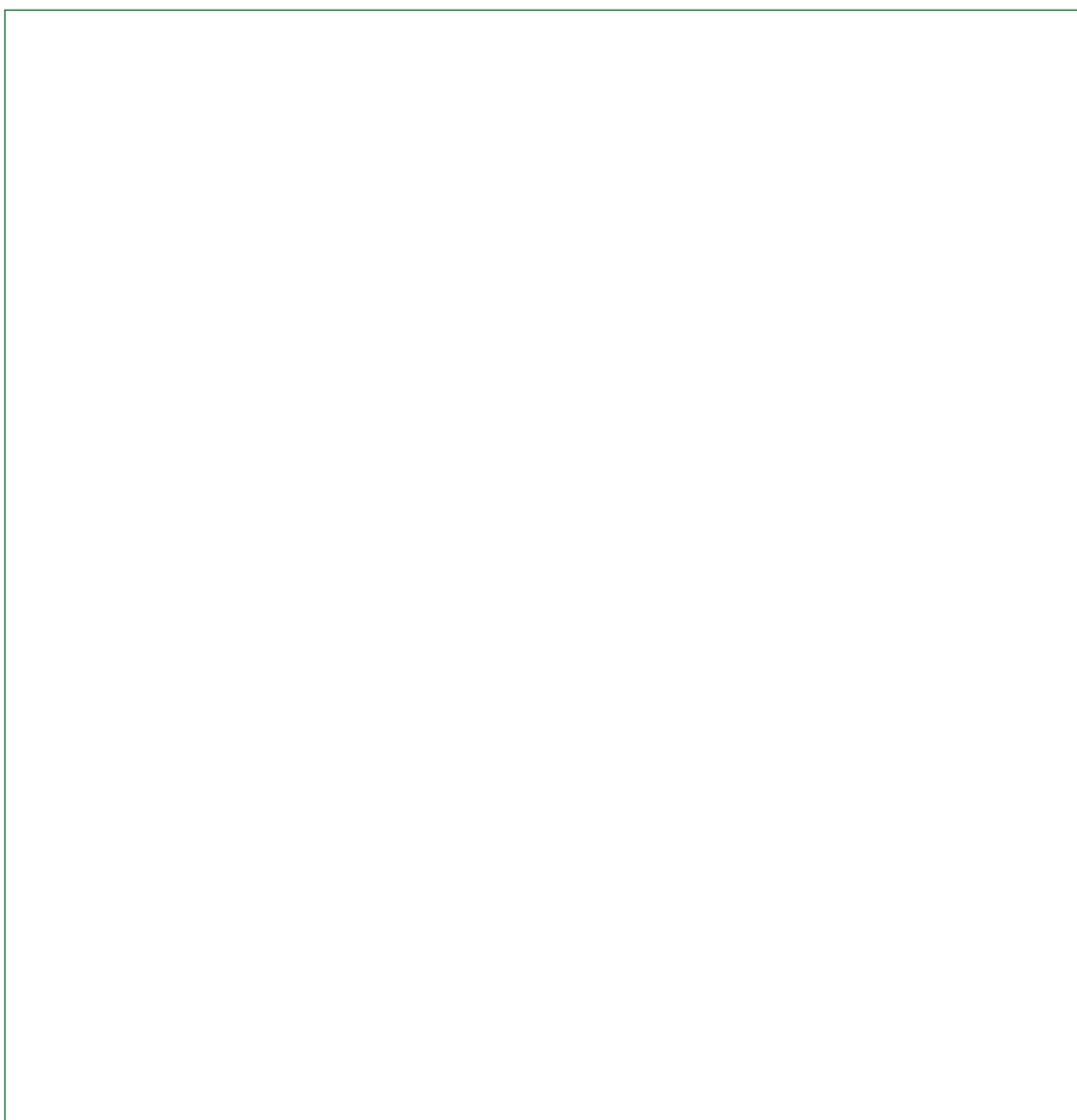
There is the saying: 'A picture is worth a thousand words'.

Many learners understand things better when they see a picture.

### ***Practical activity 3: Draw simple figures***

In the space below, practise drawing simple action figures to show:

- running
- dancing
- sitting
- cooking
- washing
- praying
- farming
- reading
- writing.



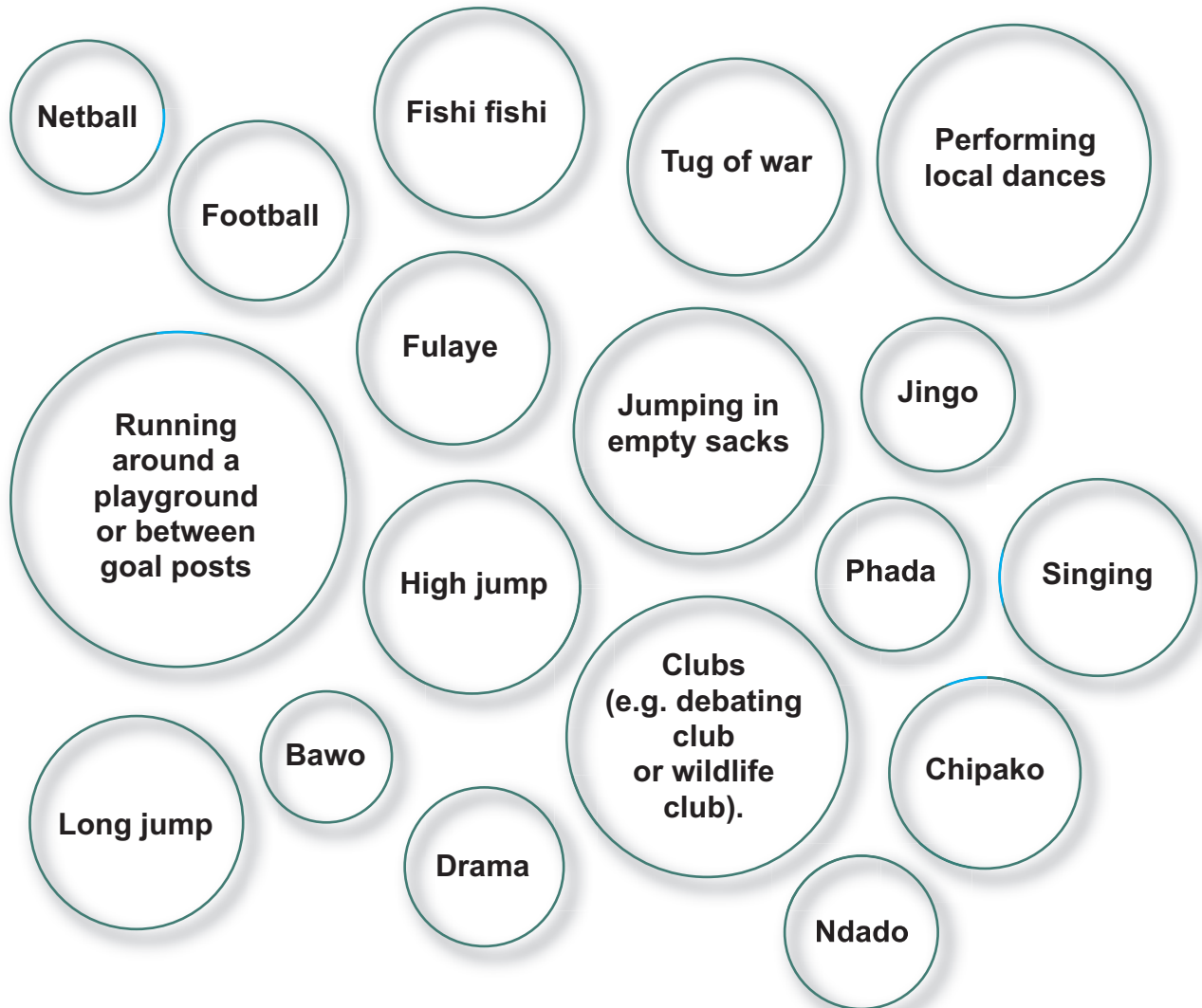
Don't worry if your figures are not beautiful the first time – practice makes perfect!

To support children's literacy learning, you can add letters and words to your figures.

To support children's numeracy learning, you can add numbers or shapes to your figures.

**Practical activity 4: Extra-curricular activities**

Look at the following examples of some extra-curricular activities that are done in primary schools in Malawi. Tick any that you know, either from your time as a learner, or from your experience as a Teaching Assistant in the KGIS programme.



In the examples above, are there activities that you think are mainly for girls, or mainly for boys? Are there some activities where boys and girls participate equally? Speak with another Teaching Assistant and write some of your thoughts in the space below:

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In your placement school are there any extra-curricular activities?  
What are these?

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### **Real-life example 3: Helping girls to be more confident in science**

Some people assume that girls are “naturally” not good at science, pointing to differences in the assessment results.

In one school, the science teacher usually asked questions to the boys, and when he asked questions to the girls, often did not give them time to answer. The boys discouraged the girls from involvement in practical science by mocking them in a disrespectful way.

Hanna, the Teaching Assistant, wanted to help the girls who were hesitant in science. She asked the teacher and the head teacher for permission to start a science club to revise science topics and encourage confidence in speaking up. Hanna also improved her own knowledge in the science club. Hanna quietly praised the girls for speaking up in class, and she praised the boys for respectfully allowing others to speak.

### ***Practical activity 5: Survey extra-curricular activities for girls***

Ask girls in your placement school if there are extra-curricular activities that they do not participate in.

What are the reasons the girls give for not participating in the activities?

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What resources are needed for the activities?

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When could girls do the activities?

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Is adult supervision needed?

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Is there anything that can be done to address the reasons they mentioned?  
Who could help? Write down your ideas here:

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Discuss with your teacher, head teacher, Mentor or fellow Teaching Assistants how to help girls take part in extra-curricular activities.

Think about how you can be a role model to girls and encourage them to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Review

Expressive arts and extra-curricular activities can be child-friendly and give opportunities for integrated learning. In some Expressive Arts and extra-curricular activities there are no right or wrong answers because every learner participates on a personal, individual level – doing what they feel. In other activities there are rules to learn and practice.

Young learners often arrive in school with knowledge of these kinds of activities from their life at home and can be naturally confident about these Learning Areas. Our enjoyment of these activities can be personal to each of us – and is often linked to our childhood experiences. We can also develop skills, such as in sports, drawing, singing or carving, if we practice regularly.

To finish this unit

We hope you have enjoyed this unit. As a Teaching Assistant, you can support learners inside the classroom and also outside the classroom in child-friendly activities. In Expressive Arts and extra-curricular activities, you can talk to learners about what they enjoy, and you can encourage their natural abilities.

Children can show natural confidence in these kinds of activities. As adults, we can sometimes lose this confidence. We hope this unit has inspired you to return to activities that you enjoyed as a learner.

Teaching Assistant’s report and self-assessment

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### Mentor comments and evaluation

[illegible]

Signed (by Scholar)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (by Mentor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sources for text/quotations and images

Page 164

Children Dancing

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/23841517@N04/sets/72157614425301791/>

Page 167

Adapted from The Chewa art of drumming and its influence on modern Malawian music.

By Grant Maclooly Moloko Nthala, a dissertation submitted in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Music at the University of the Free State, May 2009

Page 169

Storytelling

Let's Read Malawi

Page 170

Rhymes and songs

Let's Read Malawi

Page 171

Action figures

TALULAR – A User's Guide

Page 174

Survey extra-curricular activities for girls

An orientation to Gender Responsive Pedagogy, Lecturer's Guide, Malawi Institute of Education,

# Unit 3: Working for success in examinations

## Introduction

Learners need to prepare if they are to do well in examinations. Teachers and parents should help learners in preparing for examinations by guiding them to plan their work and manage time properly. Learners in Standard 8 will be sitting the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) examinations.

As a role model in the primary school, you can demonstrate good study habits to learners. Emphasize to learners the importance of study and revision in order to succeed in examinations. Guide them to develop good study and revision skills in preparation for the PSLCE examinations. Help learners find time to revise for exams so they can make the transition to secondary school.

You have recent experience of studying and revising for MSCE exams, and you have advice in your MSCE handbook that can help the learners in your school. You will find it useful to read again the introduction sections of your MSCE folder. You will have to adapt some of the advice for primary learners, but your own experience of sitting the exams for PSLCE and MSCE will be very helpful in this task. The teacher you work with and your Mentor should also be able to help, and they might find your suggestions very helpful, too.

Remember to complete the School Experience Diary pages for each of the weeks this unit lasts.

## When you complete this unit you will have developed:

- Knowledge of exam preparation techniques appropriate to primary learners
- Understanding of how best to support primary learners in exam preparation
- Skills to manage your own learning and development

## Vocabulary in this unit:

In this unit you may find unfamiliar words. Underline these words so that you can find out what they mean. Use a dictionary or ask your teacher or Mentor to help you understand any words you are not sure of.

## Timing

You have two study weeks to complete the activities in this unit. Skim read the unit now, to learn what you must do.

### Study reading 1: Getting to know the PSLCE

PSLCE examinations are written in May. Examination timetables are sent to all primary schools three months in advance to give learners time to prepare. The exam is taken in Standard 8, Term 3. It lasts three days and two papers are written on each day: one in the morning session and another in the afternoon. Some papers take slightly over 2 hours, some take 1 hour and some take 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Most learners take the exam at a cluster centre, but a few take it at school. These schools are known as 'lone' centres. This happens only if a school is isolated by geographical barriers (such as rivers, mountains and forests) that will make movement for candidates unsafe or difficult.

At a cluster centre, two or more schools come to one place to sit the examinations. This is done to avoid cheating. Supervisors and invigilators are appointed by the Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB). Invigilators come from schools in zones outside the cluster centre. For security of examination materials, students and exam administrators, there is a police officer at every examination centre. To ensure fairness during national exams, students with special educational needs are accorded accommodation practices such as being allowed to take their exams in separate rooms, being given additional time, having specialist invigilators, and the provision of Braille papers or large-print papers for students who are blind or partially sighted.

Students sit six papers:

1. Chichewa
2. English
3. Mathematics
4. Primary Sciences
5. Arts and Life Skills
6. Social and Religious Education

Primary Sciences has sections for agriculture, science and health education. Social and Religious Education includes geography and history, Bible knowledge, Islam and African traditional religion.

Once exams are written, groups of teachers are appointed by MANEB to mark the papers at a central place. Scores are processed and a pass/fail list is produced and sent to the Ministry of Education, which in turn conducts the selection process. The results are ranked on a scale of A to D:

- A and B are distinctions
- C is a credit pass
- D is a bare pass
- F is a fail.

Depending on the quality of performance, some students are selected to go to conventional government secondary schools while others go to community day secondary schools. Those with bare passes may not be selected, and they may either repeat or go to private secondary schools.

After the marking exercise, examiners produce a report in which they highlight strengths and weaknesses on overall student performance. These reports are sent to all schools every year. Teachers read these reports and

use the report information to make improvements to how they prepare students for exams. Past exam papers are used for revision, and to inform learners about the type of questions to expect, format of the paper and mark allocations.

### **Practical activity 3: Find out about the exam**

Complete the tables below of questions about the examinations the learners will sit. Try to answer as many as possible for each subject. If there are any questions you cannot answer, ask your Mentor, your head teacher or teachers for information. You can also find some of the answers in past exam papers in your school.

#### **CHICHEWA**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, essay, multiple choice?	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

#### **ENGLISH**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, essay, report, multiple choice?	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

**MATHEMATICS**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, technical questions, calculations, multiple choice?	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

**PRIMARY SCIENCES**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, essay, technical questions, calculations, report, multiple choice?	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

**ARTS and LIFE SKILLS**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, essay, technical questions, calculations, report, multiple choice	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

**SOCIAL and RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

● How long is the exam?	
● How many sections are there in the paper?	
● How many questions must they answer in each section?	
● What types of question are there? Short answer, essay, report, multiple choice?	
● Are some questions worth more marks than others?	
● How much time will they have to answer each question?	

Now that you have this information, you can talk to learners with knowledge and confidence about what they can expect. With this information, you can help the teacher and help the learners prepare for the exam.

**Study reading 2: Key ideas for exam preparation**

The examinations that primary-school learners sit are important to their future. Their chances of going to secondary school – and their life opportunities – are linked to success in exams.

Exams can cause stress if learners are not prepared. You can help to boost their confidence and help them feel ready.

As learners prepare for examinations, you can talk to them about these three key ideas:

- 1. We will know what to expect about the examination. We will learn what the questions are like, and what the exam paper looks like.**
- 2. We will revise what we know. We will decide what topics we don't know very well and we need to work more on before the exam.**
- 3. We will prepare. We will test ourselves regularly.**

Regular short tests can give learners opportunities to practise. This can be done through weekly tests and end-of-topic or chapter tests. Short tests can require learners to remember information, show understanding, and apply their knowledge to new situations.

Short tests can be designed for learners of different abilities, so that everyone can make progress. Remember, it is normal to make errors on practice tests. Errors show what learners need to revise and learn.

**Practical activity 2: A poster for the classroom**

In the space below, write in your own words the three key ideas in Study reading 2, above. Use words that the learners will understand.

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2.

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3.

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Make a poster of the three key ideas you have written above, and leave some space at the bottom of the poster.

Read the ideas aloud, together with learners. Talk with the learners and add any other ideas that will be useful to them when preparing for the exams under the three key ideas in the poster. Emphasize that, with preparation, they can ALL succeed.

Discuss with the teacher where best to put the poster to ensure the learners can see their ideas.



### Study reading 3: Preparing for exams

Most schools do not have revision clubs and there is no policy in place. But some schools have come up with their own ideas to help learners prepare for examinations. For example:

**Study circles**, where learners of different abilities help each other in groups. Teachers give tasks to the groups to keep them studying, and then meet the groups periodically. At times, the tasks are done in groups and then later each learner works on the task individually to check understanding. This option works well when all members of the study circle are active and involved.

**Study camps**, where schools ask learners to camp at the school close to examination time to revise. The learners use classrooms to sleep and temporary shelters for bathrooms and prepare their own meals. This option works well when everyone is committed to protecting and supporting learners. This option is not good for girls if they are at risk of sexual abuse by male learners or teachers.

How do learners in your school prepare for examinations? Write in the space below:

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You have recent experience of studying for and doing exams, and you developed useful skills last year for this. By sharing them with the learners and the teachers, you are acting as a role model for study.

### Real-life example 1: A revision timetable for learners

Mrs Khobwe is a Standard 8 teacher at Mkukula Primary School. She is dedicated in her work and the head teacher likes her hard-working spirit. She has been teaching the same class for years. During her years of teaching Standard 8, many learners have been selected for government secondary schools in Malawi.

Josephine, a Teaching Assistant in another school, wanted to know what Mrs Khobwe's secret was! In response, Mrs Khobwe said: "I introduced a revision club at the school. I divide the learners in groups, assigning the bright learners as leaders. I give them topics to read and ask them to take note of difficult areas. They bring them to class for discussion and together we find better explanations. This assists the slower learners to catch up with their friends."

Josephine was helping Standard 8 learners prepare for examinations. She could see that the learners were feeling pressure, and some were becoming upset and sad, so she decided to follow Mrs Khobwe's example.

Josephine talked to her Mentor and the Standard 8 teacher about how to support the learners and help them to feel more confident following Mrs Khobwe. She asked the class teacher if she could help learners revise by making time every day for some revision with a group. The teacher agreed.

It was not possible for Josephine to work with the 50 learners in the Standard 8 class together, so the teacher identified 10 learners who had most difficulties in each subject.

Josephine and the teacher prepared the revision plan below and Josephine took a group of 10 learners for a revision session in one subject every day at the end of the morning.

Week day	Subject	Topics
Monday Group 1	Agriculture/expressive arts	Farm tools Land preparation Artistic activities from which one can earn a living
Tuesday Group 2	Science and health	States of matter Water-borne diseases
Wednesday Group 3	Social and religious education	The solar system Physical features Population Kings of Judah
Thursday Group 4	Maths/life skills	Profit and loss Budgets Commission Entrepreneurship
Friday Group 5	English and Chichewa	Letter writing Comprehension passages Question tags Parts of speech Clauses

The sessions were 45 minutes each. Josephine showed learners example exam questions and gave them practice quizzes. The learners began to feel more confident about what to expect in their exam.

At the end of each session Josephine explained to the learners that they could use the same ideas for the other subjects, and encouraged the learners to speak with those who went to other revision sessions, to learn from them about the different subjects.

### **Practical activity 3: Make a revision timetable for the learners in your class**

First, make notes on the following questions. Write your answers in the spaces below.

- The date of the learners' exam

.....

- The number of days or weeks until the exam

.....

- The resources learners have to revise (books, notes, quizzes, posters, past papers, etc.)

Use the real-life experience above as an example. Talk to your Mentor and the Standard 8 teacher about a simple schedule to give groups of learners some revision time between now and the PSLCE exams. Like Josephine, you cannot work with all the learners at the same time. Revision in small groups often works better than with a large group as you can support the learners individually. With 1 or 2 other Teaching Assistants in your school, plan between 4 and 8 revision sessions you can give for the learners between now and the PSLCE exams. Plan out:

- how many learners will be in each group
- how much time you will have for each session
- what topics you can cover in the time
- what you will do in the time (quiz, discussion, past paper, etc.).

Use the table below as a guide:

**My Standard 8 revision timetable**

Revision session	Date and time	Topic	How many learners	What will I do
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Remember, even a short period of revision (such as ten minutes) is much better than no revision at all.

Avoid trying to do too much so that learners do not get discouraged.

Encourage learners to talk to each other about the exam questions, like Josephine did in the real-life example above.

### Real-life example 2: Setting goals for revision

Goals will help learners stay focused. Try to be very clear about what learners can accomplish during revision time. This is a good study habit.

Read the real-life example below about how one Teaching Assistant helped learners to develop this skill.

Teaching Assistant Johanna offered a science revision session to Standard 8 learners. There was not much time for the session – only 20 minutes after school – because learners had to walk home.

Johanna gave the learners a short science quiz. She then had the learners check their answers in pairs. The learners liked this, because they could practise reading the questions.

Johanna prepared different types of quizzes, so learners could practise and become quicker at this type of exam. She used the quizzes to check learners' understanding of the topic and also their vocabulary knowledge.

### Practical activity 4: Planning a quiz for learners

Below, you will find a quiz that could help learners revise for an exam. Follow these steps.

1. Take the quiz yourself.
2. Now check your answers. How did you do?
3. How long did it take you to read the questions and circle the answers?
4. Were there any words you didn't know?
5. What do you think will be difficult for learners when they take an exam like this?
6. How would you help them become familiar with the format and the vocabulary of this exam?

Remind learners that in any exam they should:

- allow time to read calmly through the paper
- take care to follow the instructions and answer the right number of questions
- allow time for checking at the end.

Remember to  
write in the  
School Experience Diary.

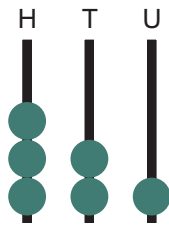
What did I do  
this week?

## Quiz

**Encircle the letter that makes the most appropriate answer for each of the following questions:**

1. An instrument used for measuring temperature is called a .....
  - a. hydrometer
  - b. thermometer
  - c. barometer
  - d. manometer
  
2. Which of the following diseases is transmitted by mosquitoes?
  - a. Scabies
  - b. Measles
  - c. Malaria
  - d. Bilharzia
  
3. Which artistic activity is used in a society to produce mats?
  - a. Weaving
  - b. Carving
  - c. Plaiting
  - d. Palm leaves
  
4. Mr Phiri is a good teacher,..... he?
  - a. isn't
  - b. hasn't
  - c. doesn't
  - d. wasn't
  
5. Which of the following documents does not use the national coat of arms?
  - a. The constitution
  - b. Passports
  - c. Bus tickets
  - d. Driving licences
  
6. The cat is ..... the table.
  - a. in
  - b. at
  - c. for
  - d. under
  
7. zungulira uko tikumane.
  - a. luzi
  - b. lamba
  - c. njoka
  - d. njira

8. Express the following abacus in form of numbers.



- a. 213
  - b. 123
  - c. 321
  - d. 231
9. The planet closest to the sun is.....
- a. Neptune
  - b. Mercury
  - c. Venus
  - d. Saturn
10. The air that we breathe in is called .....
- a. oxygen
  - b. carbon monoxide
  - c. carbon dioxide
  - d. nitrogen

You can find the answers to the quiz at the end of the Unit page 194.

### Real-life example 3: Preparing for examinations

Lusizi took her MSCE examinations in 2010 and managed to get very good grades. Some Teaching Assistants from Salima were preparing for their examinations the following year and asked Lusizi how she had prepared for the exams.

Lusizi said that the first thing was to think about what she wanted to achieve in life and then work towards achieving the goals. The first goal she set herself was to pass the MSCE exams. She identified the following factors that would help her achieve this goal:

- time management, planning a timetable
- attending classes regularly
- taking short notes
- reading as much as possible
- talking with fellow learners about the topics
- asking questions in class
- testing yourself by doing exercises
- getting information on exam dates, subjects, papers and materials required.

The factors identified by Lusizi were helpful to her for her MSCE exams. As a Teaching Assistant, you are helping the teacher to prepare Standard 8 learners to sit the PSLCE examinations.

What were the most important factors for you when preparing for your MSCE exams?

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Tick the factors in the list above that you think are important for primary school learners as they prepare for examinations.

With fellow Teaching Assistants, or your Mentor, discuss the importance of each of the factors that Lusizi used in order to succeed in her examinations, and whether they are suitable for the Standard 8 learners.

## Review

In this unit, you have looked at aspects that can help Standard 8 learners to prepare for their end of primary school exams. You have completed a number of activities, set up a revision timetable and have used your experience of MSCE study to provide advice to the learners.

## To finish this unit

Write about your support for the learners in your school to prepare for the PSLCE examinations. You can include examples of things you have done. For example, you might have set up a revision club for some learners. You can write about your thoughts and feelings on supporting the learners in this stage of their education.

### Teaching Assistant's report and self-assessment



### Mentor comments and evaluation

[illegible]

Signed (by Scholar)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (by Mentor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**QUIZ ANSWERS** pages 189/190

1. b
2. c
3. a
4. a
5. c
6. d
7. b
8. c
9. b
10. a

# Unit 4: Making the transition to secondary school

## Introduction

There have been big increases in girls attending primary school in Malawi. But not enough girls are completing primary school and going to secondary school. Girls are less likely to complete primary school successfully than boys and are at much greater risk of dropping out. This is generally not the fault of the girls themselves, but very often circumstances around them affect their school attendance and achievements.

As a Teaching Assistant, one of your roles is to encourage girls to stay in primary school and make the transition to secondary school. Because you have completed primary school, you started secondary school and you have taken a second opportunity to complete your MSCE, you are a good role model for girls in your school and in the community.

In this unit you will read about the factors that encourage and discourage girls from secondary education. When you have completed the unit, you will feel more confident to talk to girls with knowledge and understanding of these issues.

## When you complete this unit you will have developed:

- Knowledge of factors that encourage and discourage girls from secondary education
- Understanding of barriers to girls' education
- Skills to guide and counsel girls

## Vocabulary in this unit:

In this unit you may find some unfamiliar words. Underline these words so that you can find out what they mean. Use a dictionary, or ask your Mentor, head teacher or class teacher to explain.

## Timing

You have two study weeks to complete the activities in this unit. Skim read the unit now, to learn what you must do.

**Study reading 1: Numbers of primary-school dropouts and reasons given**

The chart below gives the number of boys and girls who dropped out of primary school in the acedemic year 2010–2011, with the reasons they gave for dropping out.

Reason	Boys	Girls	Total
Family responsibility	29,182	30,000	59,268
Pregnancy	126 (responsible)	4,522	4,678
Marriage	1,524	9,055	10, 579
Poor Facilities	2,631	2,754	5,385
Long distance	7, 578	7,505	15,083

Look at the chart and answer the questions below:

What are the similar reasons why boys and girls drop out of school?

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What are the reasons that affect mainly girls?

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**Practical activity 1: Reasons why girls leave school**

There are many reasons why girls do not get to secondary school. These include:



Now look back at the list. Which things are out of girls' control? Which things can girls control?

Tick the things that you think a girl can do something about, if she has support and encouragement.

Discuss with other Teaching Assistants and your Mentor what you think girls could do, and who could help them to do this. If you find it difficult to speak about this with others, you can also think about it on your own. You can write some ideas in the space on the next page.

This image shows a full page of blank primary-ruled paper. It features ten sets of horizontal lines across the page. Each set consists of a solid blue top line, a dashed blue middle line, and a solid blue bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement in handwriting practice. The margins are consistent on all sides.

### Practical activity 2: Using encouraging language

What you say can make a difference.

Words are powerful. What you say to learners can have an impact on how they feel and how they perform.

Read these examples of language that can discourage learners, and language that can encourage learners:

Discouraging language	Encouraging language
You are too old to be in school. Go and get married.	You are at the right age to continue your education. You have a lot of potential. You are doing very well. Your community is proud of you.
Sit down, Betty. Why are you behaving like a boy?	Be assertive. You can be a good leader, even president of this country. You are doing well, Betty. Keep it up!
Look at him. Failing simple mathematics like a girl!	Each one of you is intelligent and you can do well in all areas, including mathematics.
I don't expect you to understand this because you are a slow learner.	Don't worry. If anyone needs more time to understand this, I will make time to review it with you.
(To a disabled learner) You sit there and watch the others play the game.	You have an important job to do in the game. You must keep score and watch out for any cheating.

Now change these sentences below from words that discourage learners to words that encourage learners:

1. You don't need to take this exam. It's too hard and you'll never pass it.

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2. You are lazy. You should get a boyfriend.

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.....

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3. You are always late. School is wasted on you.

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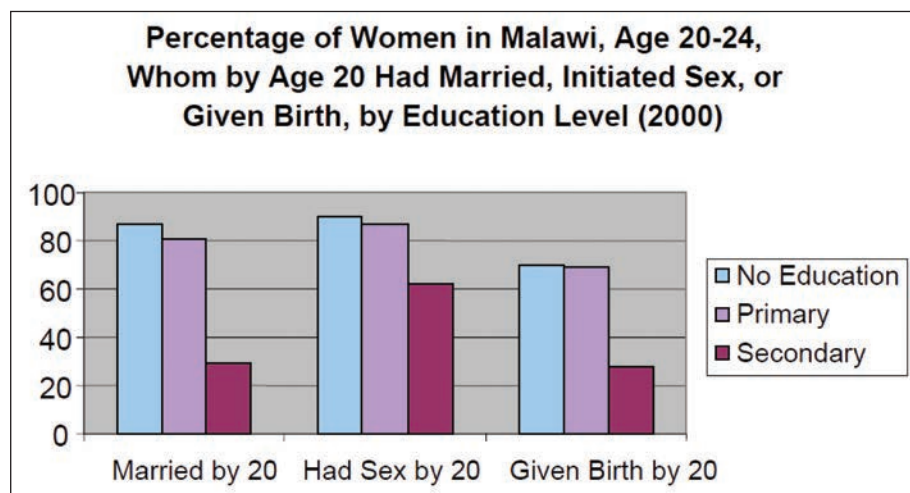
## Study reading 2: Statistics about girls' education in Malawi

If a girl has no education in Malawi, there is:

- an 87 percent chance that she will be married by age 20
- a 90 percent chance that she will have had sex by age 20, and
- a 70 percent chance that she will have had a child by age 20.

For a girl who has primary education, the risk of these events happening declines by only 1–6 percentage points.

But these trends are dramatically different for girls who go to secondary school. For a girl who has secondary education, the risk of these events happening declines by 28–58 percentage points (see the graph below).



Malawian girls who graduate from secondary school will have opportunities for further education and employment. Secondary-school students have a reasonable chance of finding employment. A study of secondary-school graduates in Malawi found that only 10 percent of the class was unemployed eight years after graduating. If girls graduate from secondary school, they have more opportunities to apply for scholarships or loans for tertiary schools or vocational training centres.

### Real-life example 1: Different thoughts about secondary school

Matilda was the first girl from her village to finish secondary school. She is proud of her achievement. She smiles and says, "I am better in biology than my parents and also better in math, and in reading, too, even that."

Matilda was a top student in the village primary school – but secondary school was not easy. She went to secondary school in the town. It had rundown classrooms and dorm rooms where 30 girls slept side by side. They did their homework, ate and talked, sitting on their beds. Matilda was sad and missed her family. There were pressures to get a boyfriend and she was sometimes distracted from her studies.

After secondary school, Matilda returned to her village. She is now working as a Teaching Assistant. She also helps her parents and four siblings with their small corn and tobacco farm. She feels some pressure to get married, but she is not enthusiastic. She wants to encourage girls in primary school to work hard and go to secondary school. She wants to become a teacher.

Matilda's aunt Dyna attended secondary school but she did not graduate. Up until now, Dyna was the most educated female in the village.

"Secondary school was the happiest time of my life," says Dyna. "You learn about how the country works and about the world. My best subject was English. They teach you so many things in school, but I did not learn enough about marriage and babies there." Dyna dropped out of school when she became pregnant at 15, and today she has four children.

Matilda says, "You get lots of things from school. You become smarter about everything. If you have an education, you have a chance to move ahead. If you don't, you have no chance at all. I know clerks at the airport, and policewomen. We see them going to offices, and that is very good. All of them have had secondary school education."

Remember to  
write in the  
School Experience Diary.

What did I do  
this week?



### **Practical activity 3: Think about the secondary school experience**

In the previous reading secondary school is described as a happy experience but also a difficult experience. Write your ideas below, about why secondary school would be a good experience but also might be a difficult time for girls.

Why secondary school would be happy	Why secondary school would be difficult

When you support learners in the primary school, you can talk to them about these issues so they are prepared to face them.

### **Real-life example 2: Pressures that can stop education**

I am Mercy, a Teaching Assistant. I tell my story to warn girls about getting pregnant and dropping out of school. I tell Standard 7 and Standard 8 girls that if they want to go to secondary school they must not get involved with boys too early.

When I started secondary school I liked spending time with boys. My friends encouraged me to have a boyfriend. My boyfriend demanded that I prove that I loved him. Day after day, he pressurized me to have sex with him.

One evening, when there was a drama performance at our school, my boyfriend asked if we could go to a sports ground to relax as lovers. While there, he started to kiss me and after some time I yielded to sexual pressure. That was the end of my virginity at 15. He assured me that nothing would happen to me.

I missed my period that month. I talked to a friend and she said I could be pregnant. She asked me if we had used a condom and I recalled that there was no condom used. I told my boyfriend and he said that he wasn't responsible because "one can't get pregnant after having sex only once". I argued with him that I have never had sex with any other person except him. I became miserable and each day I thought of what to do. I dropped out of school and went home. I was met with fury and anger. Eventually my parents got over it. I gave birth to a baby girl.

My uncle came to encourage me to go back to school. My parents were not supportive because they said I might bring them another child. There was no way that could happen to me. I had learnt a lesson. I requested that I be transferred to another school. My parents agreed to look after my baby. I am grateful that I had a second chance for secondary-school education. Now I have the possibility of becoming a teacher. Education is the most important thing a girl can have if she wants to have a bright future.

**Practical activity 4: Ways to prepare girls for secondary education experience**

Mercy had a second chance to continue secondary school. She was determined and stayed positive about her future. She was helped by her uncle and her parents. She transferred to a new school, so she could make a new start.

List the pressures that can stop girls in their secondary education:

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List actions girls can take to avoid these pressures:

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What do you think can be done, in primary school, to help girls prepare for secondary education?

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You have completed primary school and have sat MSCE exams, so you are a role model to the learners in your school. Remember to share with them examples of how you have overcome difficulties to achieve this.

## Review

In this unit you have looked at aspects that might stop girls from studying at secondary school. You have also had the opportunity to think what could be done to overcome these difficulties. As you help learners in Standard 8 prepare for examinations and for secondary school, you can talk with girls about the challenges they might face and how to overcome these challenges.

## To finish this unit

Throughout the KGIS programme, you have learned a lot about problems that affect education, particularly girls' education, in Malawi. However, you have also identified ways in which the barriers to education can be overcome. Educational resources, managing time effectively and speaking with others can help us find solutions.

Keep these positive ideas in your mind. When someone in the school or your community comes to you with a problem, talk with them and focus on 'What can we do to help solve this problem, or to make it smaller?' and 'Who can help me to find a solution?'

### Teaching Assistant's report and self-assessment

### Mentor comments and evaluation

[illegible]

Signed (by Scholar)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (by Mentor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sources for text/quotations

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Study reading 1: Chart

An Orientation to Gender responsive Pedagogy: Lecturer's Guide

Malawi Institute of Education

Page 198

Practical activity 2: Chart

Adapted from page 47

An Orientation to Gender responsive Pedagogy: a lecturer's guide

Malawi Institute of Education (2013)

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Graph

Africa Policy Journal, Spring 2007, Vol. 3

Page 200

Study reading 2:

Kadzamira 2003, p. 91

Page 200

Real-life example 1:

Adapted from CSM online

World |Global Issues

For Malawi girls, high school is only the first hurdle

By Danna Harman

The Christian Science Monitor August 15, 2007

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0815/p01s07-woaf.html>

Page 202

Real-life example 2:

Gender Sensitive Educational Policy and Practice:

The Case of Malawi

By Dr. Dixie Maluwa-Banda

Senior Lecturer & Head of Educational Foundations Dept

University of Malawi, Chancellor College

P. O. Box 280, Zomba, Malawi

# Unit 5: Review your learning and update your Personal Statement

## Introduction

Theme 6 has been about participation in different Learning Areas, preparing for examinations and the transition to secondary school. We hope the activities and readings have been useful and enjoyable to you, as you reach the completion of School Experience.

In this final unit of the KGIS programme, there are no activities for you to do with learners.

In this final Unit of the KGIS programme you can finish any work you did not have time to do before. You will review the goals you set yourself at the beginning of this year in Theme 4. You will update the Personal Statement you wrote at the end of last year in School Experience Year 1.

Over the two weeks of this unit, you will of course continue to support the learners and the teacher in your class. So you will need to complete the School Experience Diary pages, as in previous weeks. This will help you update your Personal Statement.

## When you complete this unit you will have developed:

- Understanding of what you have learned in the KGIS programme
- Skills in setting and reviewing goals for your progress
- Skills in writing a Personal Statement that summarizes your achievements.

## Timing

You have two study weeks to complete the activities in this unit. Skim read the unit now, so that you know what to plan and achieve.

## ***Practical activity 1: School Experience Diary***

Review your School Experience Diary for each week of this term. Add any other tasks you have done and any thoughts you have about School Experience.

Remember that you need to complete the Diary over these two weeks, too.

**Practical activity 2: Complete Theme 6 tasks**

Go back to Theme 6 Units 1–4. Find any activities or readings you need to finish.

Make an action plan: list the tasks and the dates you will complete them:

	Task to complete	Date for completion
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

**Practical activity 3: Review your learning in Theme 6**

In the spaces below, make short notes about what you learned in Theme 6. You will find it helpful to talk to your Mentor and other Teaching Assistants about this.

Supporting learners in Social and Environmental Sciences

Supporting learners in extra-curricular activities and Expressive Arts

Supporting learners in preparing for the PSLCE examinations



Issues that affect girls' transition to secondary school

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### **Practical activity 4: Review your goals**

In Theme 4 you set personal goals that you aimed to achieve by the end of School Experience. In Theme 5, you reviewed these goals and identified what you still had to work on.

Go back to your notes in Theme 5. Write your goals in the first column in the table below.

Write what you achieved by the end of Theme 5 in the middle column.

In the last column, write what you achieved in this final term of the KGIS programme.

You will have time to discuss this with your Mentor at the meeting you have with her/him at the end of this term.

Did you set a goal related to you being a role model for girls in school? How well did you do in this? Could you have done more?

	My goals for Year 2 of the KGIS programme (From Theme 4, Unit 5)	What I achieved at the end of Theme 5 (From Theme 5, Unit 5)	What I have achieved at the end of Theme 6
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

There may be reasons why you did not achieve all the goals you set. This does not mean you have failed. As we have seen in many of the School Experience readings, there are some circumstances that affect our lives that we cannot do anything about. An important part of learning is to think about what is possible, even if we cannot change things right away.

So think positively. Use the advice and examples you have read about over these two years. You can continue to work on your goals on your own, or with the people you have met in the school, or with your family and community.

You have achieved a lot over these two years. Never give up on your goals and your dreams.

### ***Practical activity 5: Update your Personal Statement***

At the end of School Experience Year 1, you wrote a Personal Statement. It is now time to look back on this writing and update it.

Go back to the Personal Statement that you wrote. Read it carefully.

Review the instructions for drafting and writing the Personal Statement.

The Personal Statement in Year 1 had four sections:

- My responsibilities as a Teaching Assistant in the primary school
- My School Experience studies
- My knowledge, skills and understanding about children's learning
- My goals

The Personal Statement for this second year includes similar sections, and some new ones based on the work you have completed this year with female learners in Standard 8:

- My responsibilities as a Teaching Assistant in the primary school over these two years
- My School Experience studies
- The activities I completed to support girls' learning
- My goals for the future

What would you like to add to your Personal Statement now? Talk to your Mentor and other Teaching Assistants about this.

Please write about how you have helped girls in the classroom or the school. What skills as a role model have you developed? How can you continue to use your skills and knowledge to be a role model for the education of girls in Malawi?

If you would like to continue working in a school, or if you would like to become a teacher, please write about your reasons for this.

If you would like to work in some other area for the education and future of girls, please write about this. You have two blank pages to practise your writing before you write the final version in the last two pages of this folder.

**Remember to  
write in the  
School Experience Diary.**

**What did I do  
this week?**

## My draft Personal Statement

Remember to reflect on and include examples about how you have acted as a good role model for girls in school.



## Review your Personal Statement with your Mentor

Show your updated writing to your Mentor. Ask her or him to read it and give you feedback on what you have written. You might be able to use this Personal Statement in the future to get a job, to apply for further study to become a teacher or for some other profession. Keep this in mind when you update your Personal Statement.

Rewrite your Personal Statement to add these new ideas. Make sure you are presenting yourself at your best. Look carefully at your spelling and punctuation. Read your Personal Statement aloud to make sure that what you have written makes sense. It might be useful to read it to one of the Teaching Assistants or teachers in your school.

Once you are happy with your final draft, write it carefully in good handwriting in the Personal Statement pages at the end of this unit.

When you are finished, ask the school Head Teacher to sign your Personal Statement.

## Congratulations!!!

You have worked so hard these two years. This marks the end of your School Experience in the KGIS programme. Remember that when a girl becomes educated, the whole nation gets educated. An educated girl becomes the instrument of change in her community and country. Education is the only solution to challenges of poverty, disease including HIV and AIDS, ignorance and any form of abuse. Continue to be a torch-bearer and remain focused, so that girls in your community are encouraged to complete primary school and proceed to secondary school and even higher.

Lastly we wish you the best of luck for your future. Please work hard, as you have always done.

**TAKUNYADILANI!!!!!!**

(We are proud of you!!!)

**Tikufunirani zabwino zonse.**

(We wish you all the best.)

### Teaching Assistant's report and self-assessment

### Mentor comments and evaluation

[illegible]

Signed (by Scholar)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (by Mentor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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