

**Evaluation study of teachers' views and practices toward educational quality,  
the implementation and outcomes of the World Teacher Program in  
Embangweni area, Malawi**



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**Abstract**

With this research, teachers' views and practices toward educational quality, the implementation and outcomes of the World Teacher Program (WTP) in Malawi were evaluated. The accent of this exchange program lies on creating an interactive relation in which Dutch and Malawian teachers can learn from each other, in order to improve the educational quality in both countries. The attitudes of Malawian teachers toward the program were evaluated. Moreover, several teachers, student teachers and community members who didn't participate in the WTP were involved in the research to compare the results. The research was conducted in four primary schools in the north of Malawi, that joined the program. In total, 42 individual in-depth interviews were conducted. According to the respondents, the WTP is a useful program that contributes to educational quality. Adjustments, such as more attention for the rapidity and way of learning in Malawi, can be made to improve the program.

*Key words:* educational quality, World Teacher Program, Malawi

## **Introduction**

### **The cultural context of (quality) education**

Education is a fundamental human right; every child is entitled to it. The right to basic education is laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is ratified in almost every country (United Nations (UN), 1989). School attendance is widely believed to benefit individuals, facilitating cognitive development and providing valuable skills and knowledge for the future (Ansell, 2005). Education generates both individual and social benefits and plays a role in safeguarding children from hazardous labour (UNICEF, 2007). There is strong evidence that access to (quality) education has an impact on creating economic opportunities, improving health and enhancing social justice (Drackner & Subrahmanyam, 2010; Hannum & Buckmann, 2005; Hargreaves & Boler, 2006).

Despite the CRC, worldwide millions of children remain deprived of educational opportunities. In order to ensure that every child has access to (good quality) education, the Education for All goals were established in 1990 and reaffirmed at the World Education Forum in 2000 (UNICEF, 2007). In the Millennium Development Goals, (MDG's) established in 2000, the world's governments committed to achieving universal access to free, quality and compulsory primary education by 2015 (UN, 2011). Since the establishment of the goals, the attention for quality education has grown. The problem rising with providing (quality) education is the fact that education is a product of culture. The nature of education depends among other things on how childhood and quality education are conceptualized in a certain society (Bunting, 2005; Eldering, 2008; Willems, 2002). Societies have different ideas about how a child should behave and what a child should learn (Ansell, 2005). The vision on the importance of education also varies by culture (Verhellen, 2007). Moreover, there is no consensus on what quality in education exactly is, it has different meanings for different people (Ansell, 2005; Timmermans, 2008). Ansell (2005), for example, refers to the features of schools which influence the quality, like accessibility, teaching staff, buildings (classrooms), furnishing and other resources. UNESCO (2005) uses five dimensions that influence the process of teaching and learning; learner characteristics, input, the instruction and learning process, the learning environment and the achievements. Another consistent perspective is the analytical framework of four A's (Clapham, 2007; Tomaševski, 2001), in which the right to education is divided into four dimensions. All dimensions are influencing the right to and the quality of education. The four A's consist of Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability of education.

Quality is a multi-dimensional concept and context related, as Edukans (2011b) also points out. The cultural context makes the specific characteristics subjective. The vision on quality education in industrialised countries differs from the vision in developing countries (Hofstede, 1986). As a consequence, ascertain the concept and implementing this specific idea of quality in a certain society, doesn't assure improvement of the situation for people (Ansell, 2005).

Edukans, the principal of this research, is a Dutch non-governmental organization (NGO) that aims to facilitate access to primary education in developing countries and improve its quality (Edukans, n.d.). The unique aspect of Edukans as organization is the stimulating aspect of cooperation between the north (The Netherlands) and the south (developing countries). Edukans not only works in developing countries but also actively involves the Dutch society, including schools and teachers. The key elements of Edukans' vision to develop interventions to improve the educational quality are a bottom-up approach (the starting point must be the existing teachers' daily practice), mutual learning and learning by doing (Edukans, 2011c).

World Teacher is one of Edukans' programs that focus on the improvement of quality education. It is a long-term exchange program for teachers, head-teachers and others employed in the Dutch educational system (Buissink, 2011). The program is implemented in five countries, including Malawi. The purpose of the WTP is to learn from each other and to make sure an interactive relation will be created, in which both the Dutch teachers and the Malawian teachers can learn from one another. This interactive relation is based upon the cognitive theory of Vygotsky (Gagnon, 2005; Hetherington & Santrock, 2007). The approach of the WTP consists of three phases: monitoring, sharing and improving (Edukans, 2011a). In the Netherlands, the intern goals are to inspire and motivate participants and to acquire or strengthen competences that are important in the educational system. An additional goal is to contribute to the Dutch educational system, as participants will practically apply their travel experience to their own teaching methods. The extern goals of the program are to inspire and motivate the participating teachers, head-teachers and assistants from the educational system in developing countries and to analyze and implement ideas for changes and improvements to the educational system by means of concrete long-term plans. To be able to realize quality improvement, Edukans' aim for the set up and implementation of this program is to be demand-driven and sustainable (Edukans, 2011c).

## **General aim**

The general aim of this research was to gain insight into teachers' views and practices toward educational quality, and into the implementation and perceived outcomes of the WTP in Malawi, in order to formulate key points for tailoring this program at the local expectations and the specific educational situation. By tailoring the WTP, the program could possibly contribute to realizing improvement of quality education in Malawi. In cooperation with the people in Malawi, this interim goal could be adjusted towards their vision on the problem. Interventions are more likely to be effective if the users of the program fit in the beliefs and practice of the program. They should be adapted towards the beliefs of the users, which is the goal of sense making (Evans, Matola, & Nyeko, 2008). To reach this aim, schools were visited. Beside the Malawian teachers who participated in the WTP, other Malawian teachers, student teachers and community members were also interviewed to compare the results.

This research focused on the extern part of the WTP. The intern part, the goals for the teachers in the Netherlands, were met according to the World Teachers themselves. An evaluation of the two year-pilot of the WTP showed that the exchange motivated all teachers (Buissink, 2011). Moreover, the Dutch teachers who participated in the program believed they improved their competencies (Klarenbeek & Beekwilder, 2012). The competencies they mentioned most were 'empathy', 'collaborate' and 'learning ability and self-reflection'. It is however not clear whether the extern aspects, the goals for the developing countries, were met as well.

In view of the fact that quality education is a context related concept, there is a possibility that the way Edukans defines quality education differs from the way the local teachers define this concept. To gain a better tuning between the WTP and the local desires, it is important to know the view of the users of the program (Ansell, 2005). It is important to ensure that interventions are supportive of families' existing culture, support systems, available care, and individual needs (Evans et al., 2008). Otherwise the intervention can harm the people by giving them the feeling they are incompetent or inadequate. If people are asked to assimilate materials that are imported from other cultures and to take on practices, that may cause more confusion and self-doubt than improvement in their abilities (Evans, 1994). It needs to be recognized that to change people's behaviour, one must respect who they are and what they do before they will be open to learning something new. If a program starts with local understanding of what children need, builds upon traditional practices that are helpful, and introduces new knowledge in the context of dialogue, sharing, and brainstorming, these new practices are more likely to make sense and take hold than if people are simply given

information (Evans et al., 2008, pp. 279). This sense making (of the experienced quality) had a central role in this research. Another important aspect is the community. Community psychology is a movement, promoting the role of the community to develop a healthy society (Moritsugu, Wong, & Duffy, 2010). Prevention, empowerment and creating networks are important aspects. To create an optimal surrounding for children to grow up, the whole society should be involved and not just a specific target group.

The scientific value of this research was to make the program more evidence based (Brug, Lechner, & van Assema, 2007). Hausman (2002) points out that evidence based practice interventions have several benefits. They are based on solid and reliable information. By selecting a program that works, the likelihood of improving outcomes over the long term will be improved. The implementation of evidence based practice interventions can however lead to barriers. These barriers include accessibility and availability of relevant data, social and political considerations of program decision-making, and conflicting expectations for evaluation research. In order to minimize barriers, it is important to take the community residents' own assessment of problems and priorities into account. The program must be adjusted towards local needs and conditions. The WTP can be adapted towards scientific goals of practice evidence based.

The social relevance of the research lied in the awareness of the extent in which the WTP matches with the wants and needs of the community. It is important to tailor the program at the local wishes, expectations and the specific educational situation. Moreover, the social awareness lied in the awareness of the existing difference in views on (quality of) education. Education is a product of culture. Its nature depends on how childhood and quality education are conceptualized in a certain society. As a consequence, implementing a specific idea of quality in a certain society does not assure improvement of the situation in that society. It is important to take the view of the local teachers and the community into account. This is of benefit to the effectiveness of the program (Brug et al., 2007).

### **Specific aims**

#### **Views and practices toward educational quality**

The first aim is to explore the Malawian teachers' views and practices toward educational quality. In view of the fact that quality education is a context-related concept, there is a possibility that the way Edukans defines quality education differs from the way the local teachers define this concept. The literature points out that in order to improve the

situation for people, it is important that the concept upon which an intervention is based, corresponds to the way this concept is defined in the society where the intervention is implemented (Ansell, 2005). Therefore it is important to know how teachers in Malawi think about and act towards quality education.

Due to the fact that lessons can be learned from other interventions aimed at improving the educational quality in developing countries, it is useful to take a look at these interventions and its outcomes. Multiple attempts have been made to improve the quality of education in developing countries, both at governmental and at non-governmental level (IOB, 2011a). There is no consensus on how to measure educational quality (IOB, 2011b). According to Timmermans (2008), two types of indicators of educational quality can be distinguished: structural indicators and cultural indicators. The structural indicators focus on quantitative and objective criteria. Examples are teacher-student ratio, material facilities and learners' results on cognitive tests. The cultural indicators on the other hand are qualitative, subjective and context-related. These indicators, such as pedagogical and didactic approaches and the instruction method, can vary between cultures. In accordance with this, Riksen-Walraven (2004) also points out indicators of (pedagogical) quality. Four types of features are distinguished: structural features, process features, child features and environmental features.

Several interventions are executed in order to improve the quality of education in developing countries. These interventions are among other things aimed at school infrastructure and at teaching practices and incentive of teachers. Due to the fact that it's difficult to measure cultural indicators, especially structural indicators are used to determine the educational quality (IOB, 2011b). The literature points out that inputs such as learning materials and basic infrastructure can have an important impact on learning in developing countries (IOB, 2008). On condition however that the materials are used by children in class. Too often books are stored instead of used and even when they are available to learners teachers continue rote learning. When looking at teaching practices, the literature points out that teacher quality is significantly associated with pupil performance (Atherton, 2009, as cited in IOB, 2011b). Moreover, teacher motivation has a direct impact on effective learning (Michaelowa & Wechtler, 2006).

Education is a product of culture, for that reason indicators such as the instruction method can vary between cultures. The vision on education differs between industrialised countries and developing countries (Hofstede, 1986). In the western world methods such as cooperative learning are commonly used, while teachers in developing countries especially make use of direct instruction. Furthermore, the western educational system is characterized

by a small distance between teacher and learners. In developing countries the teacher-learner relationship is generally less equal. Moreover, societies have different ideas about child development (Levine, 2003). The focus in individualistic societies is laid on the welfare of individual children while people in collectivistic societies generally see children as part of the whole group. In the western world people believe the psychological development of children is important, while in non-western cultures importance is attached to the social-moral development of children. These cultural differences affect the vision on educational quality (Hofstede, 1986).

In order to compare the views of Malawian teachers on educational quality with the vision of Edukans on this concept, it is important to first gain a better understanding of the vision of the organisation. Edukans developed an educational quality framework (Edukans, 2011b). This framework is based on three levels of improving the quality standard in schools: learning, teaching and managing. Due to the fact that this aim focuses on the teachers, only the teaching part of the framework is illustrated (Figure 1). The aspects of the framework will be further explained in the next paragraphs.

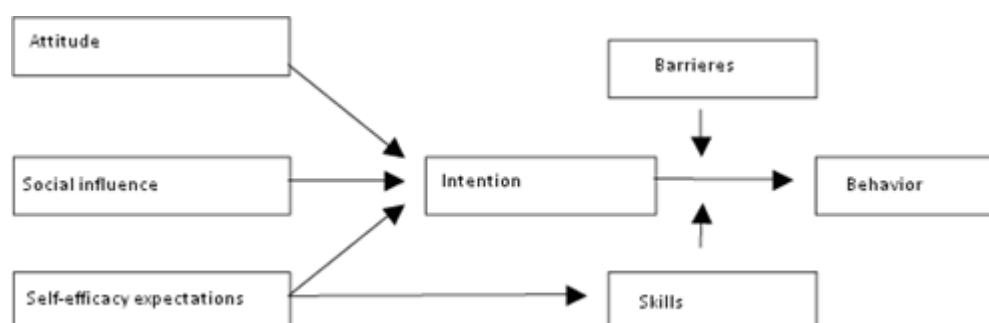
Figure 1. *Edukans quality framework (Edukans, 2011b)*

	<b>Teaching</b>
<b>Knowledge (knowing)</b>	Content Teaching knowledge (didactical knowledge)
<b>Skills (doing)</b>	Pedagogical Professional Organisational Inter-personal Cooperation in a team Cooperation with the environment Life-long learning
<b>Attitude (willing)</b>	Motivation to teach Courage (intrinsic value) Normative professionalism Biography of the teacher Practice what you preach

By using a determinant analysis the perspectives of Malawian teachers toward developing quality education can be examined. This involves teachers' views on the concept of educational quality, and teachers' practices toward developing quality education. These practices concern teachers' perceptions of their behaviour, the actual behaviour isn't examined. De Vries, Dijkstra and Kuhlman (1988) developed the ASE model (Figure 2). This often-used model is based on the theory of planned behaviour of Fishbein and Ajzen and the insights of Bandura, which attempts to explain behaviour. According to this model the behaviour of a teacher can among other things be declared by the intention of the teacher to behave in a particular way with regard to teaching. Examples are the approach to children in class and the used teaching method.

The intention toward behaviour depends on three behavioural determinants: attitude, experienced social influence and self-efficacy expectations (Brug et al., 2007). Attitude can be defined as the way someone thinks about the behaviour. Theoretical features are knowledge, beliefs, awareness and attribution. Knowledge, for example, can relate to knowledge about the content and didactical knowledge (Figure 1). Beliefs relate among other things to the vision of teachers on how children learn. In the educational quality framework, Edukans (2011b) defines attitude as 'willing'. One of the aspects that is distinguished in the framework is the motivation to teach (Figure 1). The experienced social influence can be defined as the influence of others towards the behaviour (Brug et al., 2007). Examples are the experienced support from colleagues and the community. The experienced social influence can be positive or negative. Teachers can for example also experience pressure from others to behave in a certain way. Self-efficacy expectations can be defined as the trust in yourself and the capability to show the behaviour (Baar, Wubbels, & Vermande, 2007). This involves among other things the confidence of a teacher in the own ability to teach and the confidence in the own teaching skills.

Figure 2. ASE model (de Vries et al., 1988)





The actual practice of a teacher towards developing quality education also depends on the skills of the teacher. These skills partly declare to what extent intentions towards giving good quality education actually result in giving good quality education. Several skills can be distinguished. Edukans makes a distinguish between pedagogical, professional, organisational and inter-personal skills (Figure 1). Moreover, the skills cooperation in a team, cooperation with the environment and life-long learning are pointed out in the framework. Besides skills, environmental conditions can also contribute to (protective factors) or hinder (barriers) giving good quality education. According to the literature, the educational system in Malawi faces several problems which hinder the quality of education (Chimombo, 2005). Conditions that cause problems are among other things large classes, inadequate classrooms and teaching materials, high dropout rates and unqualified teachers (Ansell, 2005). This is consistent with the way Dutch teachers described the situation in Malawi (Edukans, 2010; 2011a).

Due to the fact that cultural indicators of educational quality are context-related, the expectation is that the views of Malawian teachers on quality education are possibly different from the view of Edukans. Possible differences can be found in ideas about pedagogical approaches and instruction methods. Moreover, the literature points out that the educational system in Malawi faces several problems. Therefore, there is a chance that the Malawian teachers will point out these problems as barriers.

### **Implementation/process evaluation**

The second aim of the research is a process evaluation. This evaluation serves to check to what extent the various phases of the WTP were carried out as intended (Baar et al., 2007). In this research the process evaluation is based on the user's experiences with the intervention's implementation. It is relevant to know if the WTP is implemented the way it is meant, because the effectiveness of a program largely depends on the implementation of the program (Brug et al., 2007). When the concrete implementation isn't taken into account, there is a chance the implementation of the program will fail (Baar et al., 2007). It is for example important that there is enough public support for the intervention. By involving the users in the design and implementation of the program, a support base is created. The perceptions and opinions of the teachers involved in Malawi where the program is to be implemented, should be included to ensure that the World Teacher Program methodology fits in with these perceptions and opinions (Brug et al., 2007). This is of benefit to the implementation. It is important that the program fits the interests and the opportunities of the users and that it focuses on both the behaviour of the teachers and their perceptions of the behaviour.

Interventions often draw on certain competencies of the users. It is therefore important that the competencies and skills of the users of the program are taken into account (Baar et al., 2007).

The Dutch world teachers doubt if the Malawian teachers are informed well in advance about the program and the aims of the program. According to them, a clear picture of the program was absent with many of the Malawian partners and schools (Edukans, 2010; 2011a). Moreover, the Dutch teachers doubt if the principles of the WTP can be met. They especially question to what extent the principle mutual learning can be reached (Edukans, 2011a). According to the Dutch teachers, the Malawian teachers are motivated and willing to learn (Edukans, 2010; 2011a). They were impressed by the eagerness to learn, showed by the Malawian teachers. The Dutch teachers pointed out that progression was clearly visible at the end of their stay in Malawi (Edukans, 2010). They for example mentioned that children became more involved in class due to the increased interaction between the teacher and the children. Therefore, the expectation is that the Malawian teachers do have enough competencies and skills to successfully participate in the WTP.

By evaluating the implementation, important knowledge can be gained about the World Teacher program. Concrete suggestions of the Malawian teachers to adapt the implementation of the program can be taken into account, in order to make the program more acceptable and feasible. There will be reviewed how teachers participate in the program and how they experience this participation. The starting point of the evaluation is the perception of the Malawian teacher. By asking the teachers how they experienced the program, important knowledge can be gained about which elements of the program work, and which elements do not work (Baar et al., 2007).

### **Outcome evaluation**

The third aim is to evaluate the perceived effects of the intervention for the Malawian teachers and the community. Due to the fact that it isn't possible to examine the factual outcomes of the WTP, in this research the focus is laid on the experiences and the appreciation of Malawian teachers with regard to the program and its effects (Baar et al., 2007). Examples of perceived effects are among other things learned knowledge, competencies and skills with regard to teaching. The external goals of the WTP are to inspire and motivate the participating teachers and to implement ideas for changes and improvements to the educational system by means of concrete long-term plans (Edukans, 2011c). The Dutch teachers therefore focused on specific areas. In last years the WTP was especially focused on

active learning. This was reflected in the attention for learning by doing and multi-grade teaching (Edukans, 2010; 2011a). According to the Dutch teachers, the Malawian teachers were enthusiastic about the ideas and educational methods provided by the Dutch teachers. They besides pointed out that progression was clearly visible at the end of their stay in Malawi. For that reason, the expectation is that Malawian teachers will possibly mention these educational methods as perceived effects of the WTP.

It is however not clear if the Malawian teachers actually believe improvements have been made in education because of the WTP. Therefore, it is important to measure the intervention for the Malawian situation. The purpose is to gain insight into and knowledge about the actual desire of the local teachers to participate in the intervention and learn from the Dutch teachers. On the one hand, the expectations towards the program should be taken into account and on the other hand the actual experiences of the participants with regard to the outcomes of the WTP. The degree of agreement between the expectations and the actual experiences is an indication of experienced quality. The more similarities, the better the experienced quality (Lucassen & van Bottenburg, 2007).

It is important to stay focused on the teachers' perspective. They are the users of the program. The WTP should therefore correspond to the interests and abilities of the Malawian teachers (Baar et al., 2007). When the perceived effects of the intervention for the Malawian teachers are clear, it is possible to adjust the program to the vision of the local teachers. Moreover, this can have a positive influence on the educational situation.

## **Method**

### **Qualitative research**

The explorative evaluation of this research contained a qualitative cycle, including an evaluation on the concept of educational quality, an implementation and an outcome evaluation of the WTP (Baar, 2001; Baarda, de Goede & Teunissen, 2005). In that way, a narrative approach was used. According to Robson (2005) a qualitative design makes substantial use of methods which result in qualitative data (in many cases in the form of words). Unstructured methods are used, such as open interviews (Baarda, de Goede & Kalmijn, 2000). Moreover, the qualitative design evolves and develops as the research proceeds. Qualitative research is more exploratory in nature, it is primarily concerned with obtaining insights (Baarda, 2009). In view of the fact that the type of research was an explorative evaluation, focused on sense making, a qualitative design was an appropriate method to use.

Furthermore, this research contained an explorative determinant analysis. This was used to identify determinants of behaviour. The aim of the determinant analysis was to gain ideas about the behaviour of the teachers rather than explain the behaviour (Baar et al., 2007). For that, a qualitative design was suitable. To tailor the World Teacher program towards the local desires and conditions, it was important to determine the expectations and wishes of the local teachers and the community. The qualitative approach offered the opportunity to explore, interpret and understand ideas and behaviour of the teachers. This research covered a relatively unknown subject, namely the Malawian teachers' views and practices toward educational quality and the WTP. This was examined in its natural context. Therefore, the research was a type of case study (Baarda et al., 2005).

### **Participants**

In total six primary schools in the Embangweni area in the northern part of Malawi participated in the World Teacher program in 2010 and 2011. Due to the circumstances in Malawi only four schools could be involved in the research. During the period of data gathering, there was a fuel crisis in Malawi, which hindered travel opportunities. Besides that, it was rainy season. As a consequence, the roads to the schools weren't easily passable. The four participating schools Mbawa, Swaswa, Vibangalala and Joka were approached to participate in the research. The group participants consisted of 42 people: 23 teachers who participated in the World Teacher program, four teachers who did not participate in the program, eleven student teachers and four members of the community. Only the group of 23 teachers participated in the program. The other (student) teachers were involved in the research as a reference group to gain more insights into the vision and practice towards quality education (aim one) and the experienced outcomes of the WTP (aim three). The community members were involved to gain more insight into the vision of the community towards quality education and the usability of the WTP.

The group of teachers (both involved in WTP and not involved) consisted of sixteen male teachers and eleven female teachers. The age varied from 22 to 59, with an average age of 41.5 years. The teaching experience of the group ranged from 11 months to 33 years, with an average of 15 years. Besides 23 teachers, the group consisted of three class assistants and one volunteer teacher. The class assistants and the volunteer teacher did not (yet) attend teacher training college (TTC). The group of student teachers consisted of nine women and two men. The age varied from 19 years to 27 years, with an average age of 22.6 years. All student teachers were second year students from TTC and did an internship at one of the

primary schools. Finally, the group of community members consisted of four men, who were all involved in one of the school committees. Moreover, they were fathers of children who go to one of the schools.

To guarantee the substantive generalizability, the research group should be representative for the total population (Baarda et al., 2005). In that way, the results can be generalized to other situations and people with a similar characteristic. The research group was diverse, both male and female (student) teachers were included and the participants varied in age and teaching experience. The results were however specific for the participating schools. It is therefore only partially possible to generalize the results to other schools in Malawi. Moreover, the size of the reference groups (teachers and community members) was small. The four teachers who did not participate in the WTP all worked at the same school. In the group of community members only men were involved. They were all member of one of the school committees of Mbawa. For that reason they weren't representative for the total population of community members in Malawi.

### **Instruments**

The data have been collected by individual in-depth interviews with the (student) teachers and community members. These interviews were conducted at the participating schools. An in-depth interview is prominently a qualitative instrument. This type of interview is most appropriate for situations in which the interviewer wants to explore the respondent's feelings and perspectives on a subject (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011). In this research, the in-depth interview method was used to explore the perspectives of teachers on quality education and on the process and the outcomes of the WTP. During the interviews with the community members, one of the teachers was present to translate. A topic list was used to structure the interviews to some extent. After analyzing the first data, the questions were specified in order to gain more information about certain topics. The cycle approach made it possible to make corrections during the period of data-collection (Baarda et al., 2005). The topic list used for the interviews consisted of three parts: views and practices toward quality education (aim one), the process of the WTP (aim two) and the perceived outcomes of the WTP (aim three).

In the first part the aspects of the ASE-model were the point of focus. Examples of questions were: 'what should children learn to succeed in life?' and 'what do you do to develop quality education?' Moreover, a list of eleven aspects of quality education derived from the first six interviews, was drawn up. All teachers and student teachers were asked to

rank these aspects in order of importance. This was done to examine which aspects were most important to develop quality education according to the Malawian teachers. Besides, the list of aspects gave an overview which made it possible to compare the views of the teachers with the educational quality framework of Edukans (2011b). The second part focused on the process of the WTP. Topics that were discussed in this part concerned the implementation of the program. To examine if the WTP was running as it is intended to run, questions such as ‘what is the WTP and how did you participate in it?’ and ‘what information did you get in advance?’ were formulated (Baar et al., 2007). In view of the fact that the program should correspond to the interests and the abilities of the teachers, topics concerned the view of teachers towards the content of the WTP. Questions were formulated about the approach and the principles of the program. An example of a question was: ‘the approach of the WTP consists of monitoring, sharing and improving. How did you experience this?’ In the third part the perceived outcomes of the WTP were discussed. The topics concerned the perceived effects of the program, like learned knowledge, skills and methods. Examples of questions were: ‘did you learn something from the Dutch teachers? Can you tell more about it?’ and ‘what do you still use in class?’ Moreover, one topic concerned the usability of the program. Therefore, questions such as ‘did the Dutch teachers contribute to solving experienced problems in education, and how?’ and ‘are there things that you cannot use?’ were discussed.

All respondents were informed in advance about the purpose of the research. They were also informed about the topics that would be discussed in the interview. To decrease the social desirability of answers of respondents, interview techniques were used such as interrogation (Baarda et al., 2000). Moreover, respondents were informed in advance that the interviewers came separate from Edukans. A photo of the Dutch teachers who participated in the WTP was used to clarify the subject of the research. To make sure that all questions were understood by the respondents, the interviewer explained questions when the respondent pointed out that the question was unclear. Besides, the interviewer gave a short summary after discussing each aim to guarantee the reliability as much as possible (Baarda et al., 2000).

## **Procedure**

The qualitative data were gathered over a period of three months (January, February and March 2012). The data consisted transcriptions of 42 interviews. Thirteen interviews were held at Mbawa, six interviews were held at Swaswa, sixteen interviews were held at Vibangalala and three interviews were held at Joka. Finally, four community members were interviewed. These members were all involved in one of the school committees of Mbawa.

The difference in number of respondents per school can be explained by the size of the schools and the fact that student teachers did their internship at Mbawa (two student teachers) and Vibangalala (nine student teachers). The teachers who did not participate in the WTP all worked at Swaswa. The list of aspects of quality education was drawn up after the first held interviews. As a consequence, several respondents were interviewed twice. Ethical principles were taken into account. The respondents were approached to participate in the research. They participated on a voluntary basis. In advance, the participants gave permission for recording the interview. The interviews were audio-recorded to increase the reliability (Baarda et al., 2005). Moreover, the participants were informed that the data would be used in anonymous form. The interviews were held by the two interviewers together. One of them asked the questions, the other person made notes and checked if all topics were discussed. Both interviewers held approximately half of the interviews. This was done to guarantee the reliability.

The transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed using the analyzing methods of Baar (2001) and Baarda et al. (2005). By way of analytic induction, through constantly comparing statements of respondents, a core label system was developed for each (sub) aim. The coding of the data helped to make the data more transparent and verifiable. This increased the reliability (Baar, 2001). The analyzing method consisted of three phases of analyzing: open labeling and encrypting (phase one), defining, arranging and reducing labels into categories (phase two) and integrating and relating the categories (phase three). The main focus within this analysis lied on phase two. The following process was undertaken during analyzing: labeling the fragments, relating the labels and encrypting them per aim, grouping them on sub goals and on content and divide them into dimensions. The final step was to define the different categories. Due to the systematically approach on working through the data, this method leads to more valid categories. Through matching the labels as much as possible to the answers of respondents, the intern validity was increased. The transcription of the first interview was analyzed by both researchers together. The transcriptions of the other interviews were analyzed by one of the researchers, after which the other researcher checked the labels.

## **Results**

In this part the most important findings of the research are listed for each aim. Therefore, core labels derived from the qualitative analysis are used. These core labels are *italic*. Moreover, quotes from interviews are included to clarify the findings. The numbers in

the code behind each quote refer to 1) the interview number, 2) the page number and 3) the label in the analysis. An ‘n’ refers to teachers who did not participate in the WTP, an ‘s’ refers to student teachers and a ‘c’ refers to community members.

### **Views and practices toward quality education (aim 1)**

A determinant analysis was carried out to explore the participants’ views and practices toward educational quality. The findings are outlined, using the aspects of the ASE-model; attitude, experienced social influence, self-efficacy expectations and skills, barriers and protective factors. The results are discussed in this order. A distinguish can be made between views and practices toward quality education. The practices bear on teachers’ perceptions of their behaviour. The results showed that teachers’ attitudes on how a teacher should behave correspond with their perceptions on how they behave themselves in class. For that reason, teachers’ practices are discussed in the attitude-part. Moreover, teachers and student teachers placed aspects of quality education in order of importance. The highest ranked aspects are discussed.

### **Quality education is important**

All respondents pointed out the importance of quality education. According to them *quality education leads to development of the country*. As a consequence poverty can be reduced: ‘quality education is very important, because for the nation to do well it needs people who are educated. Not only the nation, but even for a person to succeed in life you need to have education. You can’t get employed if you are not educated, so everything requires education’ (17n,1,1A1). Moreover, respondents mentioned that *quality education gives children knowledge and skills that will help them to be independent in the future*. Among other things, it will help children to overcome challenges and to interact with people from foreign countries. The respondents pointed out that *children should learn diverse knowledge*. According to them this is important because children have different talents.

The (student) teachers mentioned that *children learn by real examples*. Therefore, they believe teachers should *use materials in class* to demonstrate to learners. According to the (student) teachers, this helps learners to understand difficult concepts. The (student) teachers pointed out that it is important to *motivate learners* to come to school and to be actively involved in the lesson. Moreover, (student) teachers should *use a variety of methods* to prevent that learners get bored. One of the methods that was mentioned most is *group work*. A majority of the (student) teachers pointed out that learners learn better when they work



themselves. These (student) teachers mentioned that it is helpful to *use learner centered methods (LCM)*, because it helps learners to gain more knowledge and to tackle problems on their own. The (student) teachers agreed that it is important to *adapt to the different abilities of learners*. Two groups were distinguished: slow learners and fast learners. According to the (student) teachers who prefer using LCM, the fast learners can help the slow learners when children work in groups. Besides, learners who perform well can serve as example for the other learners. The (student) teachers who don't prefer using LCM however pointed out that they are worried that especially the slow learners will miss information and as a consequence won't benefit. Finally, some (student) teachers mentioned that children copy the behaviour of others. Therefore, they believe *parents and teachers should serve as role models for learners*. The (student) teachers pointed out that *teachers should be dedicated and show good behaviour*.

**Qualified teachers are needed most to realize quality education**

Both teachers and student teachers agreed that qualified teachers are needed most to realize quality education (Figures 3 and 4). This is based on the top three ranked aspects. The aspect was defined as follows: a qualified teacher is someone who has finished college. This

Figure 3. *Ranking teachers*

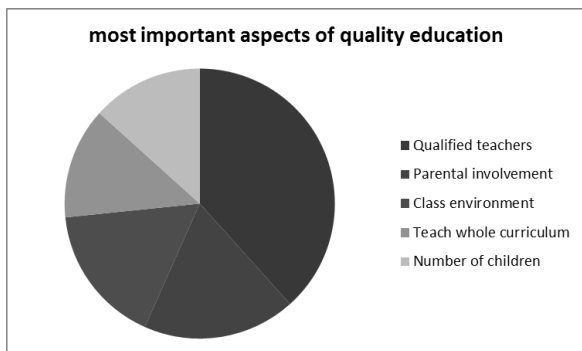


Figure 4. *Ranking student teachers*

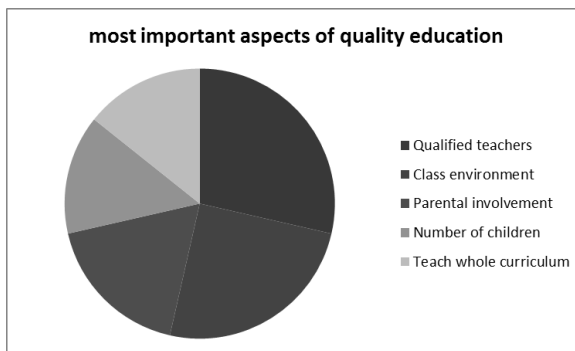


Figure 5. *Ranking male teachers*

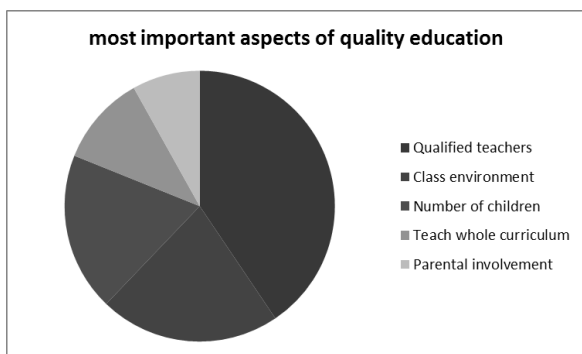
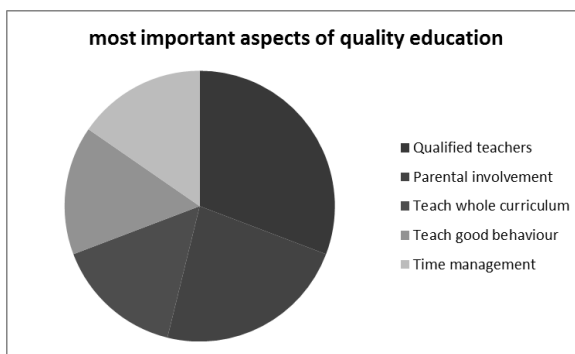


Figure 6. *Ranking female teachers*



person is dedicated and shows good behaviour. He has knowledge of the subject matter and knows how to deliver information in order for a child to understand. Moreover, a qualified teacher knows how to handle learners and how to deal with different abilities of learners: ‘if you understand the different learner abilities, it will be able for the teacher to deal with that particular learner. If you know how to deal with that learner, that particular learner is going to get quality education, no matter that he or she is a slow learner’ (31s,4,1A1). The other two aspects that completed the top three are ‘class environment’ and ‘parental involvement’ (Figures 3 and 4). The teachers and student teachers disagreed on which aspect should be ranked in second and third place. The male teachers and female teachers also disagreed on which aspects, apart from qualified teachers, are the most important (Figures 5 and 6).

### **To improve education parents should be involved**

Opinions were divided over the importance of parental involvement. The aspect was both placed in the top 5 of most important and of least important aspects. Both groups defined parental involvement as follows. Parents are involved by sending their children to school. They have to make sure that a child is well fed and well dressed: ‘they should send their children to school in good time. They should provide their children food, and if a child has not eaten, when in class it doesn’t learn (...) Education begins at home’ (35,8,1A1).

Some parents are involved through committees. One of the community members pointed out that the committee should among other things look after the welfare of children. He defined welfare as ‘being healthy and able to go to school’. The (student) teachers mentioned that almost all *parents are involved in several activities in the school*. They help to build school buildings and houses of teachers and they provide (school) materials: ‘they make the bricks. They bring grass. If you talk of parental involvement, you should talk of parents to be involved in the education of a child. That is, they should help us build certain structures here at the school, for example toilets’ (1,11,1A2). When a child is absent or shows bad behaviour teachers contact parents to find out what causes the problem. According to several respondents, parents are the first ones to *teach children good behaviour*, the teachers only add something to this. They defined good behaviour as ‘being disciplined and having respect for teachers, parents and visitors’. The (student) teachers mentioned that learners learn better when they are disciplined and behave well. A small group pointed out that parents also have to be involved in the schoolwork of children, such as checking the progress of children and assisting them when they have a problem.

According to the respondents, *most parents are helpful* and have a positive attitude towards education. The (student) teachers mentioned that this depends on the level of education. It's easier for parents who went to school themselves to know the importance of education. Although most parents are helpful, *some parents are not*. These parents don't come to school on a regular basis and in some cases they keep children at home to work: 'When I'm saying parents should be education oriented, some do not believe to say if one is educated it will be powerful, no they will feel like you are just wasting time. What if you go to South Africa? Where the people go and work and get a lot of money, they feel that would be better. So, somewhere somehow, some parents still do not take education as very important' (6,5,1A1). The (student) teachers mentioned that it would be helpful if parents would be more involved in the school.

### **The class environment should be conducive**

Both student teachers and teachers defined class environment the same way. Two aspects were distinguished: what the classroom should look like and the attitude of the teacher and learners. Mainly the first aspect was mentioned. Both teachers and student teachers pointed out that *the classroom should be conducive*; it should be a place where children feel comfortable. This encourages them to come to school and it helps them to learn effectively. It's important that there are enough desks and chairs so that learners don't have to sit on the ground. There *should be enough learning and teaching materials* and charts to place on the walls. Besides that, the (student) teachers mentioned that the classroom and its surroundings should be clean and quiet. When all classrooms would have doors and windows, learners would be able to concentrate better. In order to make the classroom conducive, *the teacher should be friendly* and show the learners that he is willing to teach: 'for a learner to feel that he/she is learning, you must be comfortable in the class, so that you can be able to listen to whatever the teacher is going to teach. So there must be a good teacher-learner relationship, learner-to-learner relationship' (7,2,1A2). Boys and girls should be treated equally. Some (student) teachers mentioned that children should also be dedicated and willing to learn.

### **Teachers feel supported by colleagues**

Concerning the experienced social influence, the respondents mentioned that they *share knowledge and skills concerning teaching with colleagues* and that they learn from each other. According to the (student) teachers, meetings are organized to discuss problems with colleagues who work at the same school and sometimes with colleagues from other schools.

The (student) teachers pointed out that they work together as a team. When they have doubts about certain subjects, they *ask a colleague or someone from outside the school for assistance*. The teachers mentioned this is helpful because other people have more knowledge about certain topics. Some teachers pointed out that colleagues sometimes observe each other's lessons: 'sometimes a certain teacher is very much knowledgeable, more than the other. Like in my case someone who is better than me in a certain area I would ask him to teach that element on my behalf while I'm there watching so that in the future I'm able to do exactly as my friend has done' (18n,6,1A1).

### **Teachers feel able to teach, although the circumstances make teaching difficult**

Concerning the self-efficacy expectations, the teachers who went to college mentioned that *they are able to teach* because they learned how to teach at the TTC. Teachers who didn't finish college (yet), mentioned that it's important to finish college and learn more about teaching. They learn from their colleagues and *ask for assistance from colleagues* when they experience problems. Due to a shortage of teachers, some teachers are unqualified. The respondents mentioned that all teachers should at least finish TTC. Moreover, some teachers pointed out that *it would be better if they would upgrade themselves*, alone or together with colleagues. The teachers mentioned that they like to teach but that *it can be difficult and tiresome, due to circumstances* like large classes: 'in fact it's tough going to be realistic but because of the situation is what we do. We just have to force to say at least let me go in every class so that everyone at least by the end of the day must have learned something. but to tell the fact, it's tiresome' (18n,6,1A2).

'I feel able because we're few so what else can I do (...) I try my best although it's difficult because I need to have 1 to 60 learners, that's enough for me. But over that but I try my best' (16,5,1A1). Several teachers mentioned that the shortage of teaching and learning materials causes difficulties in teaching: 'It's not difficult to teach the large class if you have enough materials but it makes difficult because of shortage of materials' (10,4,1A1)

### **Circumstances affect quality of education**

Concerning barriers, all respondents pointed out that *the Malawian education faces several problems which hinder quality education*. One of the student teachers mentioned that compared to other countries, the quality of education is low in Malawi. This has negative consequences for future job opportunities and for the way people look at education. The

biggest problems that the (student) teachers face are *large classes* and a *shortage of materials*. According to them, especially these two aspects impede them from giving quality education.

Moreover, the (student) teachers are disappointed about the support of the government. They pointed out that they understand that the country deals with financial problems. Nevertheless, *they would want the government to be more involved*. They mentioned that contrary to previous years, *the government doesn't provide teaching and learning materials* anymore. As a consequence, (student) teachers pointed out that they feel forced to buy materials themselves and to appeal to parents. Besides, the (student) teachers mentioned that the low salary has a negative influence on the popularity of the profession: They believe the low salary holds people back from becoming a teacher: 'because for some they do not want because they get very little money so that's why we are very few' (19n,7,1A2).

### **Implementation/process evaluation (aim 2)**

This evaluation was carried out to investigate the experiences of teachers with the implementation of the WTP. Three topics were distinguished: the preparation, the approach and the principles of the program.

#### **Preparation of the WTP**

The Malawian teachers mentioned that they were *informed in advance* that the Dutch teachers would come to visit the school. Some teachers participated in the program before so they knew what they could expect. For other teachers participating in the program was new. The teachers pointed out that they were informed by the head teacher not long before the Dutch teachers arrived. The head teacher told them visitors would come to share experiences in education, to assist in teaching but also to learn more about the strategies of teaching used in Malawi. The teachers were informed that the Dutch teachers would visit the classes to observe lessons, but they didn't know the sub areas that they were going to work on: 'we didn't know that they were going to teach us multi grade teaching. They come here and observe and look at the situation at our school and they sat down and know maybe we can help you in this way, that's when they introduced multi grade teaching and we welcomed that (16,8,2). The Malawian teachers mentioned that they didn't prepare anything before the teachers arrived. They believe the aim of the program is to discuss together when the Dutch teachers are in Malawi and not before.

### **Approach of WTP**

The approach of the WTP consists of three phases: monitoring, sharing and improving. The teachers mentioned that they recognized these phases. According to them, the Dutch teachers first *observed lessons*, after which they *discussed the lessons together* with the Malawian teachers to determine what could be improved. After discussing, Dutch teachers asked if they could *give a demonstration lesson* so the Malawian teacher could observe. The Malawian teachers believe observation is an important learning method. Although they pointed out that it is useful that Dutch teachers first observed, *the Malawian teachers would like them to give more lessons*. They believe this gives teachers and learners the opportunity to see how Dutch teachers conduct lessons and it motivates learners and makes them more active. Two head teachers mentioned that the Dutch teachers didn't give demonstration lessons during the first visit in 2010. They pointed out that they think it's a pity. Besides monitoring, the Malawian teachers mentioned that they sensed sharing. They had the idea that they could *share knowledge and skills on equal terms*: 'it was equal chatting, friendly chatting, because we were willing to learn more from them, and they were willing to learn more from us (7,6,2). All teachers who participated, believe the WTP is a useful program and according to them *improvements have been made in teaching because of the program*.

### **Principles of WTP**

The principles of the program are meeting amongst colleagues, mutual learning, demand-driven and sustainability. The teachers appreciated the attitude of the Dutch teachers. According to the Malawian teachers, the Dutch teachers were sensitive, dedicated and kind: 'they show a lot of interest I can say they are people of understanding and they want to hear more from you. Then after hearing more from you they don't show that they know something but firstly they listen. After listening is when they give their views, so that's why I like them' (2,7,2). The Malawian teachers *experienced mutual learning*. They mentioned that they had the idea that the teachers from both countries learned something from each other through observations and conversations about education. Some respondents mentioned that the program would be more mutual when Malawian teachers also would *have a chance to come to the Netherlands*: 'it is a one-way visit. you only come here from Holland. But you not invite us, you not invite us to come and see how you teach' (4,4,2). In consultation with the Malawian teachers, the Dutch teachers decided what could be helpful to improve the education. One of the head teachers pointed out that the Dutch teachers first looked at the action plan of the school and decided together with the Malawian teachers which areas to

work on. Moreover, other teachers mentioned that after observing lessons, the teachers discussed together what could be improved. According to them, this made the approach demand-driven.

The Malawian teachers mentioned that most learned methods are useful and they feel able to use them in class. Some teachers only pointed out that they didn't have enough time to master them. They blamed this on the *short duration of the WTP*. According to these teachers it would be *helpful if the Dutch teachers would come for a longer period of time*: 'suppose there will be a time, for example, we are talking about multi-grade teaching, if there was a sort of a workshop for 2/3 days, so that it will be well understood, because sometimes, if we just talk, understanding, some teachers miss some of the facts. But if it was organized, and then we sit together, discussing here for maybe one or two days, let's go and practice it' (6,4,2).

Not only the Malawian teachers experienced difficulties with the tempo of the Dutch teachers. Some teachers pointed out that the learners were not able to keep up with the Dutch teachers as well: 'the program is suitable although our learners are need to be taught one thing at a time. That's you have to repeat the lesson. So our friends they are fast, of when our learners are slow, they're slow learners. So to catch up with a lesson it takes time' (40,3,2). Edukans' aim for the set up and implementation of the program is to be durable. To realize this, Edukans and the partner organization in Malawi try to continue the program in between the trips (Edukans, 2011c). The Malawian teachers pointed out that they shared the learned knowledge with colleagues. Moreover, *knowledge was shared among teachers from other schools* during meetings. One of the teachers pointed out that this happened only randomly due to lack of time. The Malawian teachers agreed that in order to make the outcomes of the program sustainable the *Dutch teachers should come on annual base*. The teachers believe this is needed to revise and share new knowledge. One of the head teachers mentioned that the school wasn't involved in the program in 2011.

### **Outcome evaluation (aim 3)**

An outcome evaluation was carried out to explore the perceived outcomes of the WTP for the Malawian teachers and the community. The Dutch teachers visited the schools at the end of April 2011 (one of the schools wasn't involved in the program in 2011). The interviews were conducted nine to eleven months after the visit of the Dutch teachers. The perceived outcomes that are described below, bear on what Malawian teachers still remember from this visit.

The teachers didn't know much in advance about the visit of the Dutch teachers. As a consequence, they didn't have clear expectations of the WTP. According to all respondents, the program has led to improvements in education. The teachers pointed out that they have learned several methods, skills and knowledge: 'we've been motivated by the methods. They are new methods to us. And it was very simple using them, children can easily inquire knowledge using the methods which were taught by these friends' (32,1,3). The methods that are mentioned most are group work and multi grade teaching (MGT). These methods are still used in the schools. Teachers mentioned that these methods are useful because they help them to handle large classes. Moreover, most teachers believe children learn better when they work in groups. They however mentioned that a disadvantage of using these methods is that materials are required. The teachers believe it is difficult to use MGT in the junior classes because there are too many learners and they all want the attention of the teacher. The method is however useful in the higher classes. Some teachers mentioned that certain learned methods aren't used frequently: 'learners are able to use it but I'm not using it frequently I should be frank. But it is a very nice method because pupils become alert.' (9,11,3). Another example is the use of MGT. According to the teachers, this method is especially used when one or more of the teachers are absent.

Teachers also learned the use of songs, games and role-playing. They believe it's useful because it makes learners active and it motivates them. Two teachers pointed out that they learned from the Dutch teachers that it's important to be dedicated. In that way a teacher can motivate learners. Several teachers still use songs, games and role-playing in class, especially in the junior classes, and they are convinced that this helps them in teaching. What teachers mentioned most are the materials that the Dutch teachers brought to Malawi. They believe materials are needed to improve the quality of education. The brought materials are still used. Teachers and community members mentioned that they hope that Dutch teachers will continue to bring materials in the future: 'they can assist in the provision of teaching and learning materials and also toys, toys for the little ones. They can assist much, he says. This is the first priority' (21c,2,2).

The teachers pointed out that the WTP also leads to benefits for learners. According to them, the learners enjoyed the visit of the Dutch teachers and they still talk about it. What learners enjoyed most during the visit of the Dutch teachers was playing games and singing songs. Because of the learned methods learners are able to learn better, according to the teachers. Moreover, the teachers mentioned that the visit of Dutch teachers gave learners (and teachers) the opportunity to meet people from another country. Among other things, this



improved the English language skills of learners. Finally, the WTP encouraged learners to come to school: ‘it is somewhere part of an encouragement. Because if you are coming very far coming here to observe and share with us it means it is one of an encouragement that education is very powerful too. So they [the learners] can see the importance of education. That these people come very far it means that to a human being the most important thing it is education (...) It is one of the role models that is displayed to us here so that’s enhancing education atmosphere (9,10,3).

### **Discussion**

The general aim of this research was to gain insight into teachers’ views and practices toward educational quality, and into the implementation and the perceived outcomes of the World Teacher Program in order to formulate key points for tailoring this program to the local expectations and the specific educational situation in Malawi. In this part answers are formulated for each aim after which feedback is given on the general aim. Limitations of the research and recommendations for future research are discussed. Finally, implications are discussed. These implications can help to better adjust the program to the Malawian situation.

#### **Views and practices toward educational quality**

The first aim was to explore the Malawian teachers’ views and practices toward educational quality. Due to the fact that cultural indicators of educational quality are context-related, the expectation was that the views of Malawian teachers on quality education would possibly differ from the view of Edukans on this concept.

In the quality framework of Edukans (2011b) three aspects are distinguished: knowledge (knowing), skills (doing) and attitude (willing). The Malawian teachers also attached importance to the knowledge and motivation of teachers. They however talked most about knowledge, the motivation of teachers was mentioned less. Concerning skills, teachers mentioned that they feel able to teach although the circumstances make teaching difficult. It was remarkable that teachers passed most of the experienced problems in education to conditions, such as class size, lack of materials and the abilities of learners. Despite the fact that teachers mentioned ‘qualified teachers’ as most important aspect of quality education, the possibilities for teachers to help improve the quality of education were mentioned less. When comparing these findings with the aspects of the ASE-model (de Vries et al., 1988), there can be concluded that teachers focused more on barriers than on self-efficacy expectations and skills. It looks like the majority of the teachers has a low intern locus of control (Ajzen, 2002).

One of the skills that is drawn up by Edukans is pedagogical competencies. The teachers pointed out structural features (teacher-learner ratio), process features (materials/school infrastructure) and environmental features (parental involvement), but there was less attention for child features, such as child development (Riksen-Walraven, 2004). A possible explanation could be that attention for the psychological development of children is less common in the Malawian culture. This was shown among other things in the way teachers explained the outcomes of schooling. According to them, it helps children to overcome problems and to find a job but they didn't talk about self-development of children. This finding can be declared by the theory of Maslow (Kenrick Griskevicius, Neuberg & Schaller, 2010). Self-development is the highest step in the pyramid. Firstly, basic needs must be realized before someone can think of higher steps. The teachers attached more attention to the social and moral development of children. An example of this was that they mentioned that children should be disciplined and have respect for adults. These findings were in line with Levine (2003), who pointed out that in the western world people generally believe the psychological development of children is important, while in non-western cultures more importance is attached to the social-moral development of children.

The fact that teachers paid less attention to pedagogical competencies can besides be declared by the fact that the interview questions weren't focused on child development in particular. It would therefore be useful if future research would focus on this topic so that a better understanding can be gained. It's important to pay attention to the pedagogical competencies of teachers. According to the literature, the pedagogical competencies of teachers have a positive influence on the development of children (Ahnert, Piquart & Lamb, 2006).

In accordance with the quality framework of Edukans (2011b), the Malawian teachers pointed out the importance of cooperation with colleagues and the environment. The community members also emphasized the importance of community participation. Consistent with the findings of Dekker (2010), community participation was by most respondents seen as a materialistic responsibility. This importance attached to community participation is also underlined in the literature. Moritsugu and colleagues (2010) for example point out that the whole society should be involved to create an optimal surrounding for children to grow up. What was striking in the way the teachers defined parental involvement was that the focus was laid especially on basic values. They for example mentioned that parents should feed their children. This focus on basic values was also noticeable in the way teachers described

other aspects of quality education. This could among other things be explained by the circumstances in Malawi. As the pyramid of Maslow (Kenrick et al., 2010) also points out, the basic needs should be met before someone can think about further steps. In the case of Malawi, where people face a lot of problems due to poverty, it is logical that the focus is laid on basic values in the first place. Furthermore, only a few participants mentioned the role of parents in stimulating cognitive development. According to Eldering (2008) this can be declared by the fact that people who live in individualistic cultures generally believe both parents and teachers are responsible for the stimulation of the cognitive development of children while in collectivistic cultures people believe this especially is a task for the school.

### **Implementation/process evaluation**

The second aim was an evaluation on the experiences of teachers with the implementation of the WTP. Consistent with the presumption of the Dutch teachers (Edukans, 2010; 2011a), the Malawian teachers mentioned that they didn't prepare anything before the Dutch teachers arrived. Moreover, they didn't know the sub areas that they were going to work on. This wasn't consistent with the way Edukans (2011c) describes the preparation of the WTP. According to Edukans, the participating schools in Malawi are informed in advance about the priority areas of attention. They ask the teachers to think about possible cases to be treated with their Dutch colleagues. The Malawian teachers however believed the aim of the program was to discuss together when the Dutch teachers were in Malawi and not before.

The approach of the program was recognized by the Malawian teachers. They believe observation is an important learning method. Several teachers pointed out that they use observation themselves as well in Malawi. The teachers were positive about the approach, they only mentioned that they would like the Dutch teachers to give more lessons. This can be declared by the way of teaching and learning that is common in countries like Malawi. Working together and learning on the job fit in the culture (Levine, 2003). Besides, people in collectivistic cultures are generally more accustomed to listening, imitating and reciting memorized information (Eldering, 2008). Therefore, learning through observation and practice fit into the Malawian culture.

Although the Dutch teachers had doubts about to what extent the principle mutual learning could be met, the Malawian teachers pointed out that they did experience mutual learning. Some teachers however mentioned that the program would be more mutual if the WTP would be an exchange visit. According to the Malawian teachers the duration of the visit was too short. They mentioned that both the teachers and the learners had difficulties to

keep up with the tempo of the Dutch teachers. Therefore, they believe it would be useful if the world teachers would come for a longer period of time, not only to share knowledge but also to spend more time together. This wish is shared by the Dutch teachers, who also pointed out that they want to spend more days at one school to have more time to interact with the Malawian teachers (Edukans, 2011a)

### **Outcome evaluation**

The third aim was to explore the perceived effects of the WTP for the Malawian teachers and the community. Therefore an outcome evaluation was carried out. In last years the WTP was especially focused on active learning. This was reflected in the attention for learning by doing and multi-grade teaching (Edukans, 2010; 2011a). According to the Dutch teachers, the Malawian teachers were enthusiastic about the ideas and educational methods provided by the Dutch teachers. They besides pointed out that progression was clearly visible at the end of their stay in Malawi. For that reason, the expectation was that Malawian teachers would possibly mention these educational methods as perceived effects of the WTP. Consistent with these expectations, the Malawian teachers pointed out that improvements were made because of the program. They were motivated by the visit of the Dutch teachers. Moreover, they mentioned that they learned methods based on active learning, such as group work and multi grade teaching. Besides exploring the perceived effects of the WTP, the aim was also to examine the experienced quality of the program (Lucassen & van Bottenburg, 2007). To examine this, the expectations towards the program and the actual experiences with regard to the outcomes of the WTP should be taken into account. Due to the fact that the teachers didn't know much in advance about the visit of the Dutch teachers, they didn't have clear expectations of the program. It was therefore not possible to compare the expectations towards the WTP with the actual experiences of the teachers.

The (student) teachers who weren't involved in the WTP, all pointed out that they would want to participate in the program. They mentioned they want to learn more about methods such as MGT and group work. According to the community members, the WTP is a useful program. They especially mentioned the brought materials as important effects of the program.

The research has led to the following insights with regard to the general aim. Teachers believe quality education is important, they are, however, especially focused on conditions and pay less attention to the own possibilities to develop quality education. According to the

Malawian teachers, the WTP is a useful program that contributes to the educational quality. However, they pointed out that several adjustments can be made to better adjust the program to the Malawian situation. The teachers mentioned among other things that the duration of the visit was too short and that more time is needed at the schools. The recommendations of teachers will be discussed in the implications-part. Although the research has led to new insights, some things are still unclear. For example, the insights gained into the views of teachers on child development were limited. Therefore complementary research on this topic would be desirable. The limitations and other recommendations for future research are discussed below.

### **Limitations**

Several factors may have influenced the results of this research. Some teachers mentioned that it was difficult to rank the aspects of quality education. Therefore, it was tolerated by the interviewers to also place aspects of equal importance next to each other during the first held interviews. Eventually, the decision was made to separate these aspects that were ranked as equally important. Hereby, the first ranked aspects were classified as most important. This was done in order to make it possible to examine which aspects are most important, according to the Malawian teachers.

Despite the attempts to prevent this, particular answers of respondents could be social reliable (Baarda et al., 2000). The Malawian teachers were really polite. They tried to give good answers. Some respondents actually mentioned this, they pointed out that they didn't want to make mistakes. Moreover, it was difficult for some respondents to understand that the research was conducted independently from Edukans. This may also have influenced the answers of the respondents. They were aware of the fact that the organization supports the education in Malawi. In past years, different groups of Dutch people visited the schools. The teachers' views on educational quality could be influenced by these visits. Moreover, it was confusing for teachers to distinguish these groups of Dutch people from one another. In order to overcome this problem, a photo of the Dutch world teachers was used to clarify the aim of the research. There is also a possibility that certain questions are misunderstood, due to language barriers and cultural barriers. A focus on the individual self and the development of the individual isn't common in collectivistic cultures. In these cultures, people focus more on their role in the group (Killen & Wainryb, 2000). It is therefore possible that the teachers weren't used to questions about their own competencies such as 'do you feel competent to teach the class?' As a consequence some teachers may have misunderstood these questions.

Besides, the teachers didn't have a critical attitude. This may also be declared by the different values that people attach importance to in different cultures. In collectivistic cultures people generally attach importance to obedience, especially in cultures where authority plays a central role (Hofstede, 1986). In these cultures, it is less common to have a critical attitude.

The research group was diverse, both male and female teachers were included and the participants varied in age and teaching experience. The results were however specific for the participating schools. It is therefore only partially possible to generalize the results to other schools in Malawi (Baarda et al., 2005). Moreover, the size of the reference groups (teachers and community members) was small. The four teachers who did not participate in the WTP all worked at the same school. In the group of community members only men were involved. They were all member of a school committee of one of the schools. As a consequence, these groups weren't representative for the total population of teachers and community members in Malawi.

It would therefore be advisable to conduct a complementary research with a larger and more representative reference group. In that way the ecological validity can be guaranteed (Baarda et al., 2005). It would for example be useful to also involve schools that did not participate in the WTP. There can be examined if there are differences between the schools, due to the participation in the program. Besides, this research only focused on perceptions on behaviour and not on actual behaviour. It is therefore desirable if a complementary observational research could be conducted on the actual teaching behaviour of Malawian teachers.

### **Implications**

In order to better adjust the WTP to the Malawian situation and to make the (outcomes of the) program more durable, several adjustments can be made.

The results of the first aim showed that teachers are especially focused on conditions and that they pay less attention to the own possibilities to develop quality education. According to the literature, teachers can play an important role in improving the quality of education (IOB, 2011b). Pedagogical competencies can help teachers to improve the educational quality, despite the lack of materials. Teachers can for example have a role in creating a positive and safe climate for learning. This has positive effects on the development of children (Ahnert et al., 2006). Riksen-Walraven (2004) distinguished four features of pedagogical quality, under which child features. The interviews showed that Malawian teachers focused especially on conditions, less attention was paid to child features, such as the

development of children. This focus on conditions was also noticeable in the results of the third aim. Several respondents mentioned that the visit of the Dutch teachers was especially useful due to the brought materials. For future world teachers, it would therefore be advisable to focus more on the pedagogical competencies of the Malawian teachers. This can help teachers to focus more on things that can be done to improve the educational quality and less on the problems and barriers they experience in teaching. In this way, the teachers will be empowered. This will help to make the outcomes of the WTP more durable.

The results of the second aim showed that the Malawian teachers weren't informed well in advance about the visit of the Dutch teachers. Therefore, the Dutch teachers pointed out the need for clearer goals. They believe the schools should be better prepared in advance. In my opinion however, preparation doesn't fit into the Malawian culture. When Malawian schools would prepare for the WTP, there is a chance that the Dutch teachers won't get a realistic view on the actual situation at the schools. For that reason, it wouldn't be useful if schools were well prepared. It was confusing for the teachers to distinguish the different groups of Dutch people who visited the schools in recent years. It would be helpful if schools would be better informed about the different groups and the aim of their visits.

Moreover, the results showed that both the Malawian and the Dutch teachers believe more time is needed to spend at the schools. According to the Malawian teachers, this time is needed for teachers and learners to master the learned methods and skills. It is therefore important that future world teachers pay special attention to the rapidity of learning of both teachers and learners. Another thing teachers should take into account is the way of learning that is common in Malawi. As Dutch teachers also noticed, repeated learning is a central issue in the Malawian education. People in collectivistic cultures are generally more accustomed to listening, imitating and reciting memorized information (Eldering, 2008). Learning through observation and practice fit into the Malawian culture. Therefore, Malawian teachers would like the Dutch teachers to give more example lessons.

Some Malawian teachers mentioned that the program should be an exchange visit. It is however questionable whether this will help the teachers. The living standard in both countries is completely different, this is reflected in the educational situations. The contrast between the educational situations in both countries is huge. As a consequence, it could be that Malawian teachers rather get demotivated than motivated when they are confronted with the luxurious situation in the Netherlands. Besides, only a few respondents mentioned that an exchange visit is desirable.

In past years, some schools were only visited once while other schools were visited more often. In order to make the outcomes of the WTP more durable, it would be advisable to visit the same schools a few years in a row. The Malawian teachers mentioned that Dutch teachers should come on yearly base for repetition and sharing new knowledge. Considering the preference for repeated learning, repetition of learned knowledge would be useful. To continue the sharing of knowledge between the trips, the teacher development centers (TDC's) can be used. According to the teachers, meetings are arranged to share knowledge with colleagues from other schools. One of the teachers mentioned this happens only randomly due to a lack of time. It would be useful to make more use of these meetings to practice learned methods such as MGT. In this way, also teachers from other schools can be reached. Moreover, the students from the TTC could be more involved in the program. According to Edukans (2011c) the world teachers work together with the TTC. The interviewed student teachers however didn't know the program. They pointed out that they would want to be involved. They were motivated and willing to learn.



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