

Chapter 4: Education

Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in Malawi in 1993-4 following the political move to multi-party democracy. Immediately after this total enrolment rose from 1.9 million pupils to a figure above 3 million, a level at which it has remained ever since. This massive increase in enrolment over such a short period has prompted major concerns over the quality of primary education.

The MPRSP includes education under the pillar of **Human Capital Development**, stating that it is the **centrepiece** for the poverty reduction strategy. It highlights (page 48) the importance of education, drawing attention to the fact that *an uneducated population does not understand and appreciate the need and means for achieving higher incomes, reducing infant mortality and population growth as well as improving nutrition and health. Functionally, the major economic sectors of agriculture and industry demand an educated, skilled and healthy workforce to take on the new challenges and aspirations of the sectors.*

There are a number of PPEs included in the MPRSP for education. Within this, the areas highlighted in primary education are teaching and learning materials and teacher's salaries, teacher training and teacher housing. The budget document 4A for 2002-3 expanded this to include allowances for the inspectorate, while dropping the PPE on teacher's salaries. Subsequently the PPE for teacher's salaries was re-included, while allocations towards the inspectorate were removed, causing a great deal of confusion over what it means to actually have an expenditure protected.

The Service Delivery Satisfaction Survey (SDSS) focussed on the level of satisfaction of the intended beneficiaries on what is being delivered under the PPEs. In particular, it asked questions on respondent's satisfaction with the number of classrooms, the quantities of teaching and learning materials and the availability and qualifications of teachers in the school¹⁹.

As with the findings from health in the previous chapter, the respondents generally view those providing the services as being qualified to do so (over 60 per cent say that the teachers in the nearest school are qualified or very qualified). However, they are working in a very difficult environment – where there are too few classrooms, many of which are incomplete, there is a poor supply of the most basic teaching and learning materials they require to allow them carry out this job, and there are simply not enough of them to carry out the work. The full results of the SDSS exercise, as they relate to the subject of education are outlined in the following sections.

4.1 Nearest Type of School

Respondents were asked to identify what type of school was nearest to their community, as can be seen from Table 4.1 below, most respondents (68.3 per cent) identified this as being a government primary school.

Table 4.1: Nearest type of school to the respondents home, by district (%)

	Government Primary	Local Education Authority	Mission Primary School	Private Primary School
Mulanje	71.2	17.5	11.3	0.0
Phalombe	77.9	0.6	21.5	0.0
Blantyre City	60.1	10.1	29.7	0.0
Mchinji	66.7	17.4	15.4	0.5
Salima	80.7	18.4	1.0	0.0
Nkhata Bay	43.7	13.3	41.5	1.5
Total (n=1030)	68.3	13.3	18.2	0.3

¹⁹ It is recommended that this section is read in conjunction with the report on the 2003 budget monitoring exercise carried out by the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE)

The respondents were then asked whether children from this household are attending this school – in response, one quarter of respondents stated that no children from this household were attending the school (this should not be taken as meaning the children are not attending school at all).

Table 4.2: Proportion of children from respondent's household attending nearest school

Type of Nearest School	Some, or all, of the children in this Household Attend this school	Nobody from this household attends this school	Missing
Government Primary (n=703)	71.8	25.7	2.4
Local Education Authority (n=137)	72.3	26.3	1.5
Mission Primary School (n=187)	69.0	29.4	1.6
Total (n=1030)	71.3	26.4	2.3

Note: figures for Private Primary have been included in the total, but have not been displayed separately because of their small number (n=3)

The most frequent reason given for this was the fact that there were no children of school going age in the household (this accounted for 60 per cent of all such cases). Amongst households where there were children of school going age, the three most popular stated reasons for children not attending the school were that they attend a school of better quality (17.1 per cent), the parents cannot afford to send the children to school (14.5 per cent) and that the school is too far away (10.3 per cent) (See Table 4.3). As the question applied only to primary school, issues of working outside the home or pregnancy should not realistically have been expected, even though there were a number of cases of this.

Table 4.3: Why no children from the respondent's household attend the nearest school

Reason	Govt. Primary (n=79)	LEA (n=5)	Mission Primary (n=28)	(%) (n=117)
Parents cannot afford to send their children	16.5	0.0	14.3	14.5
School is too far away	7.6	20.0	17.9	10.3
Child is sick	6.3	20.0	0.0	5.1
Do not see the value in education	3.8	40.0	0.0	5.1
Parents have died and there is nobody to send them	2.5	0.0	7.1	5.1
Children attend another school of better quality	12.7	0.0	35.7	17.1
Child must work at home	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.9
Child has found work outside the home	2.5	0.0	7.1	3.4
Child became pregnant	3.8	0.0	0.0	2.6
Other	43.0	20.0	17.9	35.9

Note – the number of responses for Local Education Authority schools is very low (n = 5), so care must be exercised in drawing conclusions for this number

4.2 Number of Classrooms

Respondents were asked to provide information on the number of classrooms in their nearest school. On average, in the six districts the exercise was carried out, there were 8.8 classrooms per school, of which 16.4 per cent were uncompleted.

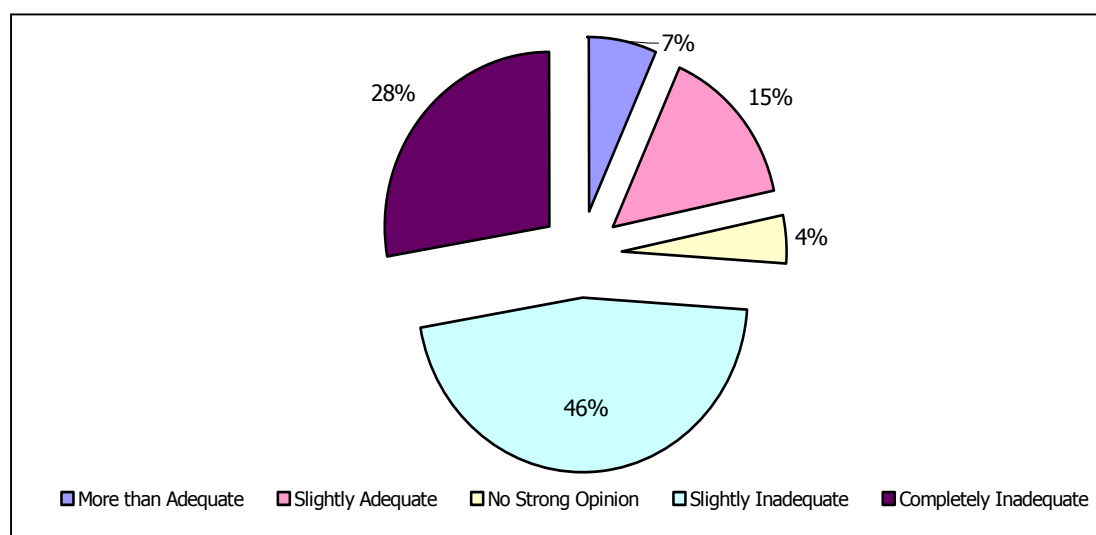
Table 4.4: Average number of completed and uncompleted classrooms (by district)

	# Completed Classrooms	# Uncompleted Classrooms	Total Classrooms	Classrooms that are Uncompleted (%)
Mulanje	8.4	1.1	9.5	11.8
Phalombe	7.6	2.6	10.2	25.3
Blantyre				
City	10.1	0.1	10.2	0.5
Mchinji	7.5	2.5	10.0	25.3
Salima	5.6	1.7	7.2	22.9
Nkhata Bay	5.4	1.3	6.8	19.8
Total	7.3	1.4	8.8	16.4

The largest schools, in terms of number of classrooms were in Phalombe and Blantyre, while the smallest were in Nkhata Bay. Phalombe and Mchinji had the largest proportion of classrooms that were uncompleted (one in four).

The respondents were then asked to comment on their satisfaction with the number of classrooms – the most frequent response was that the numbers were “slightly inadequate” (46.2 per cent); with only 6.7 per cent of respondents nationally feeling that the numbers were more than adequate (see figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Respondents perceptions on the adequacy of the number of classrooms



Salima and Nkhata Bay registered the largest degree of dissatisfaction – in both districts over 43 per cent of respondents felt that the number of classrooms was completely inadequate. Over half of the respondents in Mulanje, Phalombe, Blantyre and Mchinji felt that the number of classrooms was slightly inadequate (see Table A4.1 in the annex for the full district level breakdown).

There was very little difference between the three major types of school in terms of satisfaction with the number of classrooms. Between six and eight per cent felt the number of classrooms were more than adequate, with approximately 70 per cent expressing the feeling that the number of classrooms was inadequate. There were differences however in the depth of that feeling, with more feeling the Local Education Authority schools were slightly inadequate than the others.

4.3 Teaching and Learning Materials

Respondents were asked whether they felt there was adequate numbers of desks to sit at, chalk for teachers to use and exercise books for pupils to write in. The results of this show that people feel there is a major shortage of desks in schools – only 16 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the numbers, while in one district (Salima) this figure was as low as six per cent. The lack of desks is of particular concern in attempting to ensure the retention of girls in school, as they feel increasingly uncomfortable with having to sit on the floor as they get older, fearing that they will be subjected to unwanted sexual attention by having both pupils and male teachers trying to, amongst other things, look up their skirts²⁰.

Respondents had a different reply to the same question regarding chalk – almost 63 per cent felt that there was enough of this – however, this disguises some large discrepancies

²⁰ The CSCQBE exercise found that 14 per cent of schools had not received exercise books at all this year, 18.2 per cent had not received chalk and 91.7 per cent had not received desks. The deliveries equated to 5.2 exercise books per child, 0.12 units of chalk and 0.01 of desks

between districts – only 27.3 per cent of respondents in Salima felt the amount of chalk was adequate, whereas in Mulanje, 93.9 per cent of respondents said there was enough. Responses on exercise books fall somewhere in between – almost 42 per cent of respondents felt the numbers were adequate, but this figure was as low as 13.3 per cent in Mchinji and as high as 87.7 per cent in Nkhata Bay.

Table 4.5: Respondents who felt that there was an adequate supply of various teaching and learning materials, by district (%)

	Desks to sit at	Chalk	Exercise Books
Mulanje	17.0	93.9	51.2
Phalombe	19.1	44.4	34.0
Blantyre City	13.3	92.2	59.8
Mchinji	10.2	47.3	13.3
Salima	6.2	27.1	22.2
Nkhata Bay	32.8	84.3	87.7
Total	15.9	62.8	41.7

The figures for supply of teaching and learning materials were also analysed in terms of the nearest type of schools (See Table 4.6). The proportion of respondents who felt there were an adequate number of desks does not show major differences between the three types of school; neither do the figures for chalk. However, there is a large variation in terms of the adequacy of the number of exercise books, with only 26 per cent of respondents feeling the Local Education Authority schools had sufficient numbers of these, whereas almost 60 per cent of respondents felt that the Mission Primary Schools had sufficient supplies. A similar situation exists with regard to the perceived adequacy of the supply of pens and pencils.

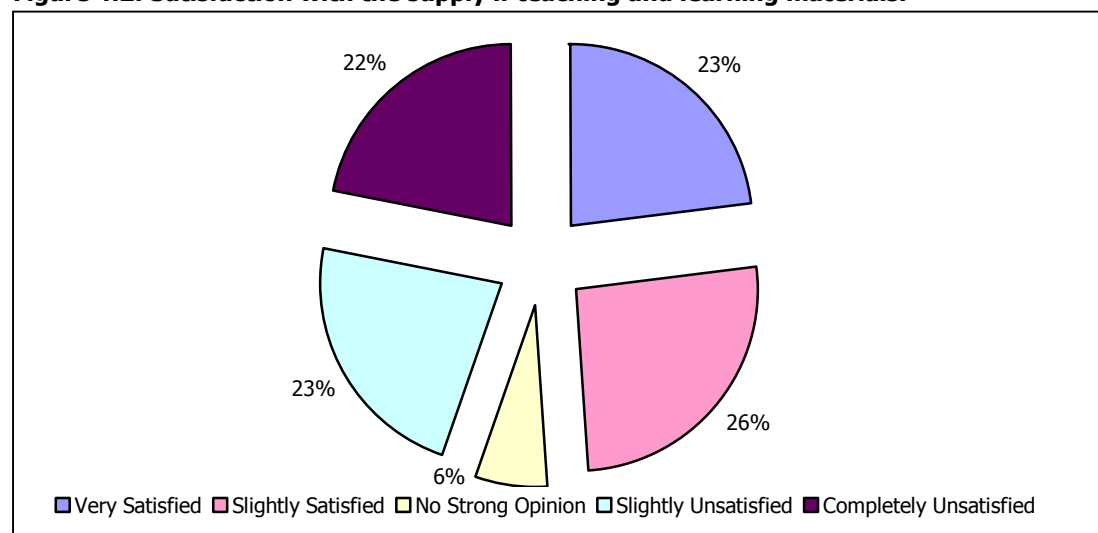
Table 4.6: Respondents who felt that there was an adequate supply of teaching and learning materials, by type of school

	Desks to Sit At	Chalk	Exercise Books	Pens and Pencils
Government Primary	14.8	60.4	39.6	33.9
Local Education Authority	20.6	62.5	26.0	19.8
Mission Primary School	15.0	72.8	59.7	45.8
Total	15.9	62.8	41.7	34.2

The Total figure includes responses for schools that the respondents were not sure of and private primary schools, their n's were too small for inclusion separately.

In terms of general satisfaction with the availability of teaching and learning materials – slightly more respondents described themselves as satisfied than unsatisfied. As can be expected, there are large differences across districts in terms of the levels of satisfaction with the supply of learning materials.

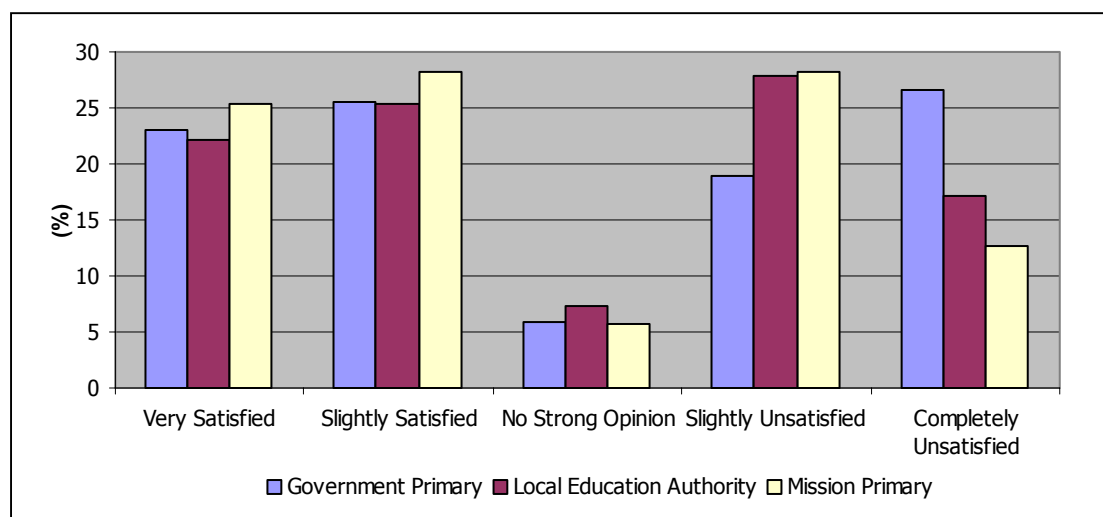
Figure 4.2: Satisfaction with the supply if teaching and learning materials.



In Phalombe, 36 per cent of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the availability of teaching and learning materials, whereas almost 40 per cent of respondents in Salima stated that they were very unsatisfied (specific district responses are included as annex Table A4.2).

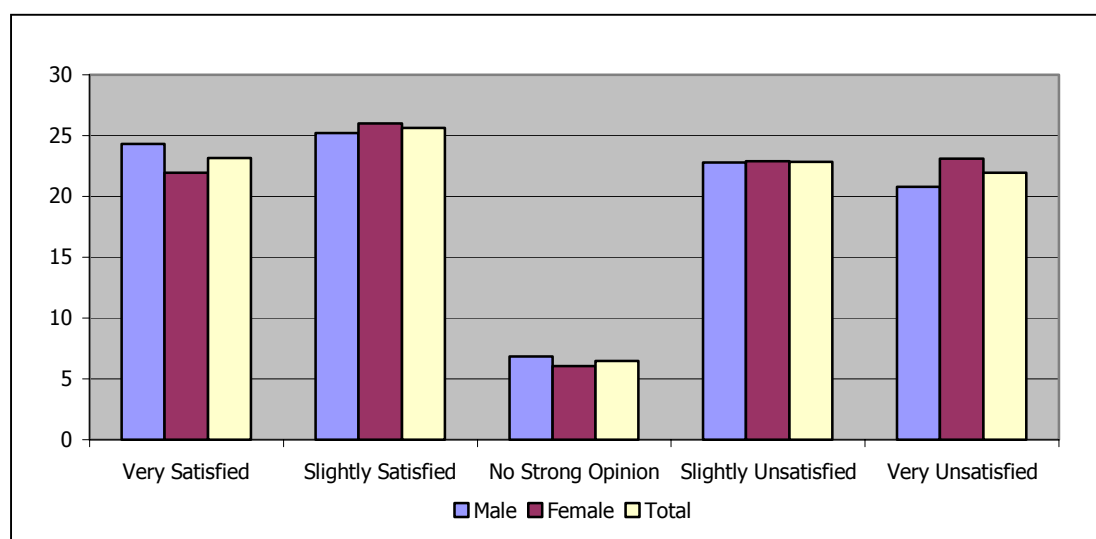
As regards the level of satisfaction with the availability of teaching materials across the type of school, there were only minor differences between the three in terms of proportions of respondents who were very satisfied or slightly satisfied. However, a larger number of respondents felt they were very unsatisfied with government primary schools (26.6 per cent) than with LEA primary schools (17.2 per cent) or Mission Primary Schools (12.6 per cent).

Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with the supply of teaching and learning materials, by school



The responses were also examined in terms of the gender of the respondents, with the expectation that women, who are generally perceived as being more in touch with the educational needs of their children, may give different responses to men. The results however do not bear this assertion out – while the male respondents were slightly more satisfied with the availability of teaching and learning materials (See Figure 4.4 and Annex Table A4.3), the differences are very small, with 24.3 per cent of men saying they are very satisfied, compared to 22 per cent of women.

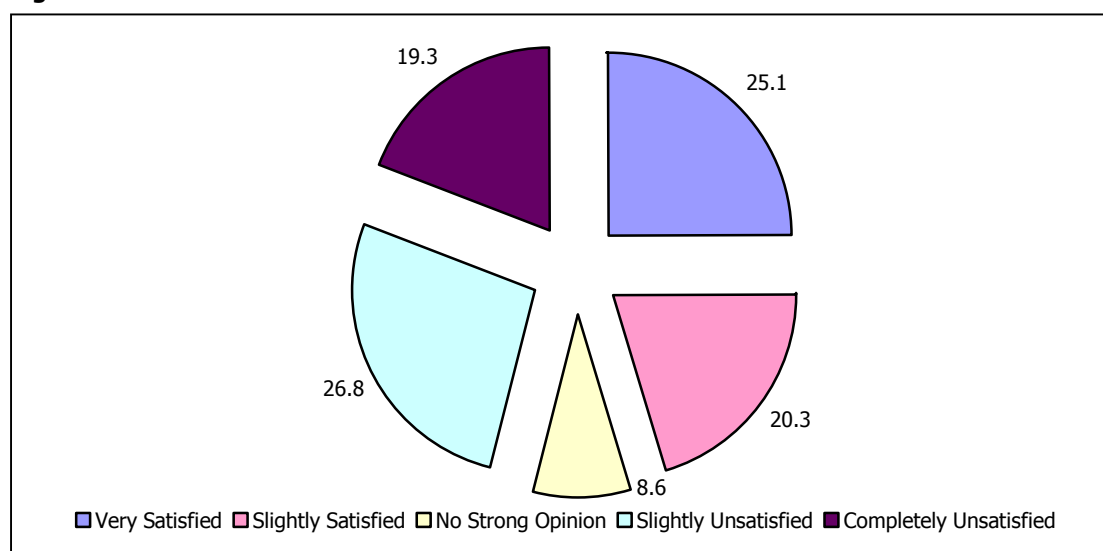
Figure 4.4: Satisfaction with the supply of teaching and learning materials, by gender



4.4 Teachers

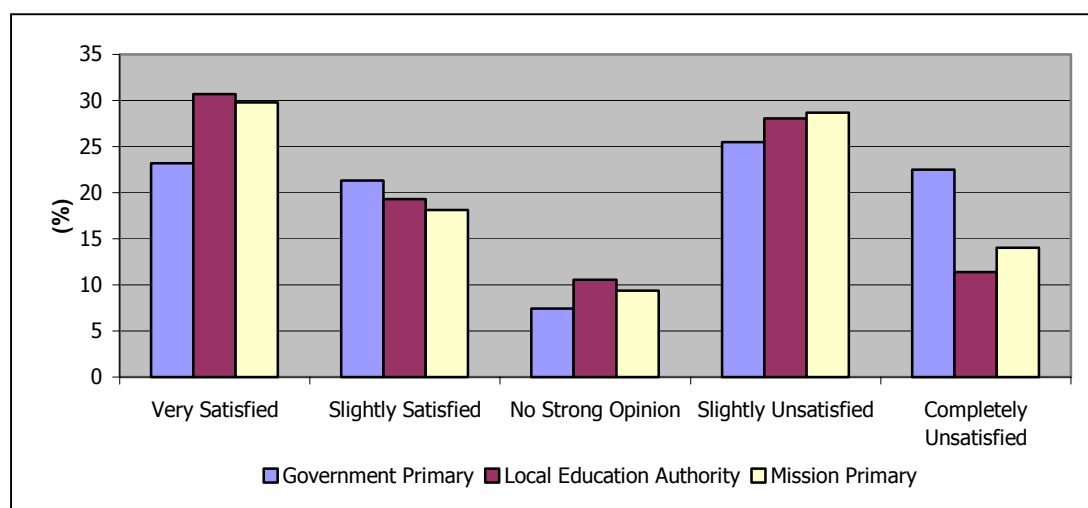
In general respondents gave a reasonably equitable response in terms of their levels of satisfaction with the numbers of teachers, 25.1 per cent said they were “very satisfied”, 20.3 per cent said they were “slightly satisfied”, while there were similar figures for “slightly unsatisfied” (26.8 per cent) and “very unsatisfied” (19.3 per cent). There were district based differences – the respondents in Phalombe, for instance, were much more satisfied than the respondents in Salima (in Phalombe 34.8 per cent said they were very satisfied, in Salima 36.7 per cent said they were very unsatisfied).

Figure 4.5: General level of satisfaction with the number of teachers



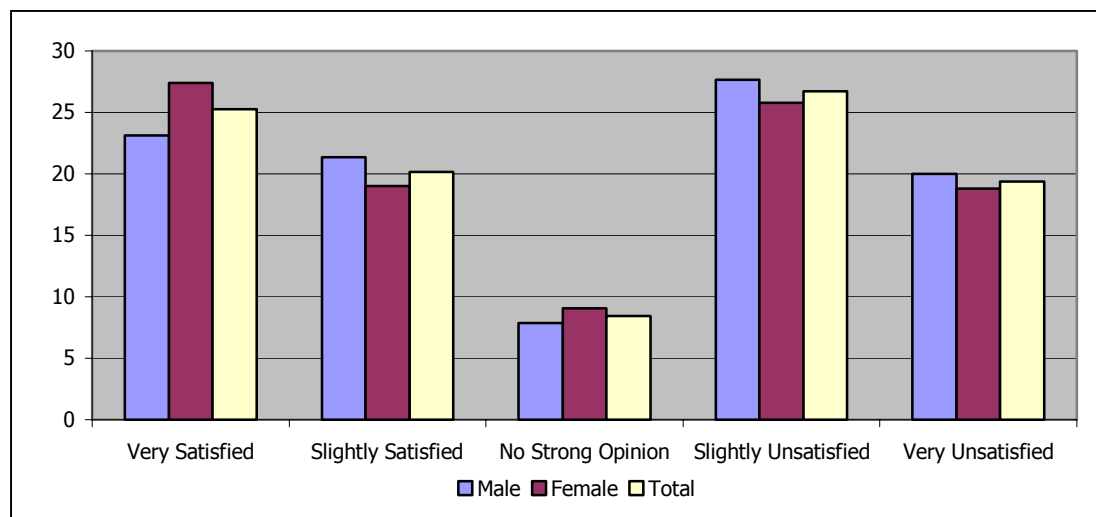
As before, the government primary school appears to fare slightly worse in terms of satisfaction regarding the numbers of teachers (See Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with number of teachers, by type of school



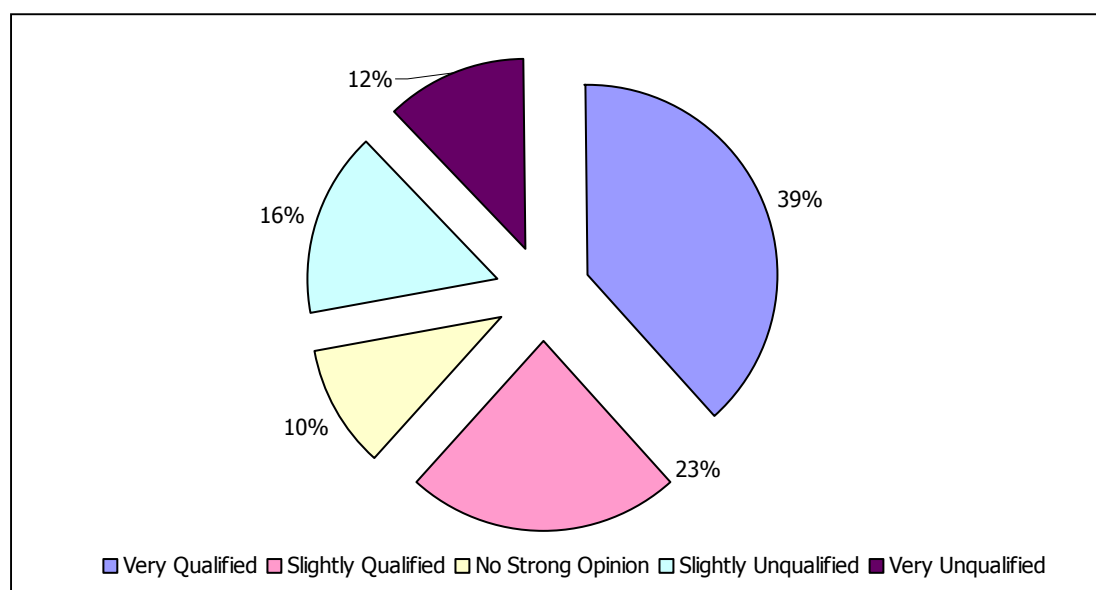
The responses for satisfaction with the numbers of teachers were also analysed by the gender of the respondents. Again, as figure 4.7 shows (see also Annex table A4.5), there is very little to distinguish between the responses of men and women, with female respondents being slightly more satisfied than the males (27.4 per cent very satisfied and 19 per cent slightly satisfied, as opposed to 23.1 per cent very satisfied and 21.3 per cent slightly satisfied).

Figure 4.7: Satisfaction with the number of teachers, by gender (%)



Respondents to the questionnaire were also asked about their satisfaction with the qualification of teachers. It is important to clarify that the respondents were not asked whether they knew how qualified the teachers were, just their opinion on whether they felt the people working in the nearest school were qualified to teach or not. Almost 40 per cent of respondents in the six districts felt that the teachers in the nearest school were very qualified, a further 23 per cent stated they felt the teachers were slightly qualified, while slightly less than one in eight respondents felt that the teachers were very unqualified.

Figure 4.8: General satisfaction with the qualifications of teachers



As with the levels of satisfaction reported in the other questions, there are major discrepancies between districts. Over 26 per cent of respondents in Salima reported the teachers at their nearest school as being very unqualified, a similar number made this response in Blantyre, while almost half the respondents in Mulanje and Nkhata Bay responded that they felt the teachers were very qualified (See table A4.6).

4.5 Where are people most satisfied?

The survey sought respondent's satisfaction levels on a number of areas in education as follows:

- ★ The adequacy of the number of classrooms

- ★ The availability of teaching and learning materials
- ★ The number of teachers and
- ★ The qualification of the teachers

Using the approach outlined in the methodology section of the report, the following calculations show that respondents in Phalombe are most happy with the quality of services offered to them in education, while those in Salima were the least satisfied. This may be due to the fact that in Salima 22.9 per cent of classrooms remain unfinished, respondents had the worst opinion on the adequacy of the supply of desks and chalk (and second worst on exercise books) and had the highest rating of "very unsatisfied" with the number of teachers.

Table 4.7: Satisfaction with education – weighted responses by district

	Adequacy of Number of Classrooms	Adequacy of TLM	Satisfaction with number of teachers	Satisfaction with Teacher's qualifications	Average Rating	Rank
Phalombe	-0.37	0.62	0.65	1.02	0.480	1st
Mulanje	-0.76	0.52	0.27	1.09	0.279	2nd
Nkhata Bay	-0.45	0.53	-0.05	1.06	0.273	3rd
Mchinji	-0.79	-0.35	0.02	0.34	-0.195	4th
Blantyre	-0.84	-0.34	-0.10	0.08	-0.300	5th
Salima	-1.16	-0.66	-0.60	-0.06	-0.621	6th
Total	-0.73	0.05	0.05	0.60	-0.009	

Similar calculations can be carried out for the same four questions referring to the main types of school. In this instance, Mission Primary schools score highest in terms of satisfaction, followed by local education authority primary schools and government primary schools.

Table 4.8 Satisfaction with education – weighted responses by type of school

	Adequacy of Number of Classrooms	Adequacy of TLM	Satisfaction with number of teachers	Satisfaction with Teacher's qualifications	Average Rating	Rank
Mission Primary	-0.60	0.25	0.21	0.58	0.110	1st
Local Education Authority	-0.50	0.07	0.30	0.45	0.081	2nd
Government Primary	-0.81	-0.01	-0.03	0.64	-0.051	3rd
Total	-0.73	0.05	0.05	0.60	-0.009	

4.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

The preceding sections show a picture of teachers struggling to provide education for children in a difficult physical environment and without the necessary equipment to support them. In general, the respondent's perceptions on the qualifications of teachers are positive, however their views on all the other aspects of providing education, such as the number of classrooms and the supply of teaching and learning materials do not match this. In total, people's perception on the overall quality of the education service provided is generally negative (scoring -.009 on a scale of 2 to -2, worse than any of the other services examined).

As mentioned, the area respondents appear to be most satisfied with is the qualification of teachers. This is somewhat surprising considering the widely held belief amongst those active in the area of education that the quality of teachers is weak. This apparent contradiction can perhaps be explained by the poor educational standards that many of the respondents themselves would have, and a belief that anybody hired as a teacher must be qualified. If this is the case, it places the responsibility in ensuring that these expectations are met on government, and requires further research on the area²¹. Part of the reason could perhaps

²¹ Readers are referred to the aforementioned report by the CSCQBE which deals with the subject in more detail.

also have to do with the fact that, as the CSCQBE exercise revealed, only 17.4 per cent of teachers have at present received no training (admittedly this is as high as 25 per cent in rural areas).

Respondents are not, however, happy with the number of teachers, something which is much more apparent for them to see regardless of their level of education, with 46.1 per cent of respondents saying they are either slightly or completely unsatisfied. Again, this would be more in line with the CSCQBE findings that there has been an embargo on the recruitment of new teachers in recent years, paradoxically pushing up the pupil teacher ratio, while at the same time lowering the pupil to qualified teacher ratio.

In general, it appears that the focus of attention in primary education needs to remain one of providing a reasonable physical learning environment for children. In particular, improvements in the actual buildings pupils are expected to learn in must be tackled, as must the number of teachers who provide education. Improvements also need to be made in the actual supply to schools of Teaching and Learning Materials, especially bearing in mind the substantial allocations made to this (MK 436 million). In this regard, this report echoes the recommendation of the recent CSCQBE work, that in addition to increasing the allocation to TLMs enhancing the equitable allocation of them also needs to be a high priority.