

Passing Malawi's Revised Education Act

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For over 50 years, Malawi used the 1962 Education Act to govern its education system. This document was created before independence. The need to review the act became clear when taking into consideration the transformations that the education system went through over the years. For example, free primary education which was not supported by the then Education Act. In August 2003 the Malawian government and other stakeholders started a process of revising the Education Act and created a new one. This new Education Bill brought many important changes that would improve the education system. However, Parliament dragged its feet in passing the law and the delayed passing of the Education Act went on for almost more than a decade. This inaction is what prompted the Civil Society Education Coalition-CSEC and its partners to team up and call on Members of Parliament and Government to pass the bill.

In order to achieve this objective the following strategies were used by the coalition—an intense media and lobby campaign, which included radio programs, feature articles, media events; a petition to the Speaker of Parliament and meetings with Members of Parliament and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

In the ensuing years, radio programs were organized as a part of the campaign, a [flyer](#) outlining the benefits of the revised Education Act and mobilizing the public to engage with their Members of Parliament on this issue was designed and published in English and local language and articles that analyzed the issue of the delay in enactment of the revised Education Act, including one that appeared in the October 28th 2013 “the Nation” (printed and online editions). <http://mwnation.com/delays-enact-education-bill-hampering-progress/>

A media event was organized around the submission of the petition to the Speaker of the Parliament and a documentary film presenting public voices in support of revised Education Bill and calling on the MPs to prioritize the issue of education was produced and presented during the Stakeholder Meeting.

CSEC further issued a statement impressing upon the President to honour her pledge for education, and ensure that the right to education of Malawian children was at the core of the Government Agenda. Within that same week, Parliament amended its business schedule to allow for the tabling and deliberation of the Education Bill which was earlier not included on the business, and passed it into law.

The advocacy for the enactment of the Education Bill took a long time. It started in 2008 when the Coalition generated a position on the subject matter and ended in 2013/2014--seven years of constant lobbying and questioning of the effective implementation of free primary education in the absence of a clear law to safeguard that right. It was also essential that we convinced government and Members of Parliament that the bill was important—knowing that free primary education was already a tall order for the country in

terms of upholding quality. And while the bill has been passed in to the law—the work doesn't stop here CSEC is calling on the Ministry of Education to formulate guidelines and other policy directives implement the new law and will be tracking the extent of implementation of the new law to ensure that it is successfully executed to benefit Malawian children.