



## CSEC UNCOVERS MISAPPROPRIATED MONEY WORTH MWK 3,000,000.00 MEANT FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The coalition since 2015 is implementing global partnership for social accountability project with funding from the World Bank. The project aims at enhancing community participation in the management of schools and one of the schools is Tsabango 1 primary school of Kauma Zone in Lilongwe Rural East division. In the year 2016 as a result of capacity building of the school governance structures, Tsabango school governance committees managed to unearthed a dishonoured cheque of MWK3 million which was meant for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) for its school.

The dishonoured cheque was meant to among other things relieve the over 11, 000 enrolled school which operates the overlapping system of managing classes of locally defined needs such as procurement of TLMs which would have included key things such as chalk, textbooks and additional mobile chalk boards for the open air classes that characterise lesson delivery in the school and maintenance of the inadequate existing classroom blocks and toilets.

Former head teacher for the school who is now Primary Education Advisor for Kauma zone Mr. Kadzipatike attributes the discovery of the returned to the drawer cheque and the subsequent engagement between the school based structures and the authorities at the district education manager and district council offices to the social accountability activities facilitated by Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC) in the school.

“We had been waiting for unnecessarily long to receive our 2015/2016 SIG after we had otherwise submitted our SIP in good time but nothing was coming our way. In fact some time later towards the end of the month of June last year we were told that our cheque had been deposited at Area 3 FMB branch but after three days we were told that the account had insufficient funds hence we did not know what to do next and stayed back in the school,” explained Mr. Kadzipatike.

Memory Mwanza, project officer for GPSA who is responsible for Lilongwe district says CSEC was tipped about the incidence through one of the capacity building interactions with the school based community structures.

“As you might wish to know our area of focus in strengthening social accountability in the education sector is to monitor the movement of textbooks from procurement to end usage, and SIG being one of the new financing mechanism for the schools which has an aspect of procuring TLMs under the

pillar of quality and relevance had been earmarked for monitoring too so that the project could have a complete picture of how textbooks are made available into the schools through different sources,”

She added, “As we were preparing the communities to undertake the tracking of the usage of SIG for the year 2015/2016 we learnt with curiosity that Tsabango 1 had not yet received their SIG although the academic year had wound up. Our subsequent investigation in close collaboration with the school monitoring team (SMT) revealed the cheque worth MWK3 million which was deposited into the school account on 26<sup>th</sup> of June, 2016 was a day later referred to the drawer.”

CSEC’s continued pressing over the matter has since seen the office of the Lilongwe district council blaming the office of the DEM for not taking necessary follow up steps after the cheque was dishonoured by the banks. Efforts are underway to ensure that Tsabango 1 is prioritised in the following academic year of 2016/2017 which is currently in session as the previous lot has automatically been forfeited with the expiry of the financial year 2015/2016.

CSEC has been implementing a three year project called Strengthening Social Accountability in the Education Sector (SASS) with lead collaboration from Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN) since January, 2015. The project has so far built the capacity of school based structures such as SMCs and PTAs in demanding effective service delivery as it relates to distribution, usage and safety of textbooks in five selected primary schools including Tsabango 1 in Lilongwe Rural East district alone.

Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) is a governance window opened in the year 2014 under the World Bank as a leading development partners especially for poor countries in order to enhance community participation and increase engagement between duty bearers and rights holders as a way of improving delivery of social services while at the same time minimising incidences of corruption and other governance related challenges.