



THE MALAWI NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD (MANEB)

NEWSLETTERVOL.1



MANDATE

To conduct academic and other examinations at the conclusion of any approved course in Malawi as it may be considered in the public interest and award certificates and diplomas to successful candidates in such examinations.

VISION

To be a highly reputable, credible and internationally recognised examining body.

MISSION

To conduct valid and reliable examinations for certification, selection and placement purposes; and provide professional advice relating to assessment and examinations.

Preserving the integrity of national
examinations through quality assessment



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WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Gerald Axel Chiunda, BEd, MSc
Executive Director, MANEB**

We are pleased to present to you our first online newsletter. This newsletter is another platform for appraising you with our aspirations, achievements and challenges in our efforts to fulfill our mission of conducting valid and reliable examinations for certification, selection and placement purposes.

Looking back at 2019, we are delighted to share with you some of our achievements. Among our main achievements was the release of the Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination results before the commencement of the academic year. We were greatly humbled and honoured to have the Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Dr William Susuwele Banda preside over the announcement of those examinations

results. To us this was a demonstration of the highest support and goodwill from government in our determination to provide credible and competitive services to the nation.

The administration of leakage free examinations was another milestone in our battle against examination malpractices. As you are aware, for the recent past few years we have been a victim of leakage of MSCE examination. For instance, in 2018 three out of the 54 MSCE papers were shared on the social media. Just like any other institution which strives to achieve excellence in the provision of services, we were devastated by this leakage. To avoid a similar scenario in the 2019 examinations we made some structural adjustments to our operations during delivery of the examination. We are glad to report that our efforts yielded positive results. We received tremendous support from all relevant stakeholders and consequently managed to have leakage free examination.

We are also pleased to inform you that in 2019 we were engaged in several benchmarking activities with other examining institutions. We hosted external examiners from Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa and Namibia during the MSCE awards meeting. Through this activity we once again got assurance that the procedures we follow for standard fixing and the quality of our grades compare well with those of other assessment institutions.

In pursuit of excellence and attaining international recognition, we have flown our flag higher by participating in international conferences. We attended the 46th International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) meeting in Azerbaijan. In August we participated in the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) conference which was held in Nigeria.

We are also currently chairing the Southern African Association for Educational Assessment

(SAAEA)Research forum.

We are proud to announce that for the first time in the history of MANEB we have developed Examinations Management Policy (EMP) and this is in line with our strategic goal of achieving well managed national examinations and assessment systems. Our anticipation is that the policy will be a fool proof document to guide our operations in the

management of the examinations to increase our efficiency and mitigate risks.

We believe that with your support we shall continue to conduct valid and reliable examinations to maintain our reputation.



EDITOR'S NOTE



INFORMATION SHARING

By **Mayamiko Chiwaya- Public Relation Manager (PRM)**

Dear Readers,

In this newsletter we have a number of articles intended to inform, educate and sensitize you, our esteemed readers, about various activities and initiatives undertaken by MANEB to achieve well managed examinations. Through these articles MANEB also expects you to get essential and correct information regarding its operations.

2019 examinations are long gone but there are some activities that MANEB still highly values and has drawn lessons from. In this newsletter, therefore, we give you the highlights of the 2019 PSLCE and MSCE examinations with special focus on examination results.

Principles that MANEB applies in its operations to ensure that national examinations are valid and reliable have equally been articulated in a number of articles. Additionally, you will note that the newsletter includes information on how MANEB is taking its services closer to valuable clients and what efforts have been undertaken to enhance team building spirit among its employees for efficient and effective service delivery.

MANEB is a member of several professional bodies and, therefore, engages with other examining institutions at different levels for information sharing and socialization. This too has been reflected in some of the articles.

MANEB also shares with

you challenges it experiences with candidates' registration data which is received from schools and the impact of such challenges on examination results.

This being MANEB's maiden newsletter your suggestions and feedback to MANEB will be most appreciated. MANEB hopes to continue giving you a snapshot of its activities which depict its aspirations, values, beliefs and culture, meanwhile, enjoy reading.

Thank you!

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019 PSLCE AND MSCE EXAMINATIONS

By **Mayamiko Chiwaya**



Honourable Dr William Susuwe Banda-announcing the release of 2019 MSCE examination results

The 2019 Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations started with registration processes at school level. Total registered candidature for the two examinations was 282,428 and 92,867, respectively. The 2019 MSCE candidature dropped to almost half of 2018 and mostly comprised internal candidates. The tremendous drop in the candidature could be

ascribed to lack of confidence among Open Distance Learners (ODL), who had registered in large numbers for the previous year's examinations.

The 2019 PSLCE and MSCE examinations results were released within a space of one month. On 5th August, the Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Technology Dr William Susuwele Banda announced PSLCE examination results at a joint Press Conference,

between MANEB and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Venue for the press was Ministry of Information Central Office in Blantyre. On 2nd September MSCE examination results were released at another joint Press Briefing presided over by the Honourable Minister.

The release of the examination results well before the opening of schools for the 2019/2020 academic year was a remarkable achievement for MANEB and the nation at large. This was attributed to several factors, the most significant of which was the capturing of scores during marking using double data entry system to check correctness of scores entered. This innovation increased efficiency compared to previous years' practice whereby markers used to manually check scores from mark sheets. Government's timely approval of the results also facilitated the speedy release of the results.

The overall pass rate for PSLCE was 77.46%. Pass rate for male candidates was 82.47% and this was higher compared to

the 72.15% for females. The pass rate for Special Needs candidates was 67.14%, a slight increase from 63.33% of 2018.

For MSCE the pass rate was 50.36%, which was much lower compared to the 63.23% of last year, 2018. The number of female candidates that sat for the examination was 41,708 and their pass rate was 42.89%, and this was lower compared to male candidates' pass rate of 56.46%. The pass rate for the MSCE Special Needs candidates was 52.71%, a drop from 56.36% of last year.

The dismal performance of MSCE candidates could have been caused by a number of factors. Firstly, the 2019 MSCE examination was the first examination for the new secondary school curriculum and such being the case the candidates were not yet acclimatised. Secondly, the cohort that sat for the examination mostly comprised candidates who had been full time learners and first time takers of the examination. Thirdly, this was the first cohort to take MSCE examination without having attempted the Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) examination, which was

abolished in 2016. To a certain extent the examination results were a reflection of how the new curriculum is performing in secondary schools.

In his statement during the announcement of the results, the Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Dr William Susuwele Banda commended MANEB for its efforts in curbing leakage. The MSCE examination only registered 6 cases of cheating, a sharp contrast to the 152 cases that were recorded at that level of examination in 2018. This is another positive development and MANEB owes it to supervisors, invigilators and security officers that were engaged in the administration of the examination.

The problem of absenteeism of candidates during examinations remains a concern. The percentage of absentees at PSLCE was 5.4%, a rise from 5% of last year. One centre registered 11 candidates but by the time examinations were to be administered 10 of the candidates had dropped out of school and they opted not to sit for the examination.

For MSCE examination 5.5% of those that had registered for the examination were absent.

In the spirit of transparency, MANEB ranked schools according to their performance in the examinations. For PSLCE examination, the best performing school was Nat swe in Dedza. Phalombe emerged the top most district to have produced the best results. Faith Mhanda of Mkanda school in Mulanje district was the best overall candidate.

Loyola Jesuit Secondary School of Kasungu district was the best performing school at MSCE level and Arthur Promise Chibondo of Zomba Catholic Secondary School was the best candidate with an aggregate of six points.

To sum up, the 2019 PSLCE and MSCE examinations were unique and will go down in the history of MANEB as one of the best years in terms of the fight against examination malpractices and dates for release of examination results. MANEB hopes to do even better in 2020 examinations and beyond.

IMPACT OF REGISTRATION, ERRORS ON CANDIDATES' RESULTS

By **Lawrence Msiska**



Lawrence Msiska- Principal Policy Planning Officer

For every national examination the cycle starts with registration of candidates, which is done at MANEB approved examination centres. During registration, candidates provide their particulars such as names, sex, age and subjects that they intend to sit for. This data is used for making crucial decisions, for instance, number of examination

papers to be mass produced and number of invigilators to be hired. Therefore, provision of wrong data during registration potentially has adverse effects on examinations. To avert the consequences that may culminate into embarrassing crises, MANEB prints nominal rolls, which are sent to examination centres for candidates to verify their registration details. After receiving nominal rolls, centres write back to MANEB to present errors observed on the rolls for rectification.


To appreciate the nature of errors and the point from which they emanate, MANEB carried out a quantitative analysis of the nominal roll queries that were received for 2019 Primary

School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations.

All queries that were received from centres were each read and recorded on to Microsoft Excel sheet according to their nature. The analysis showed that at PSLCE the most common query was on wrong spelling of names, seconded by wrong sex code, wrong date of birth and wrong disability code. For MSCE the most common queries were deletion of subjects on the registration template, inclusion of wrong subjects for candidates and wrong name spellings.

From the analysis of the queries it was clear that

NOMINAL ROLL



THE MALAWI NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

PRIMARY SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION -2019

****NOMINAL ROLL****

INTERNAL CANDIDATES

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DISTRICT : 19		MANGochi		SCHOOL: 899		YAKUSALALA		STREAM : A		
		D	P	DATE				D	P	DATE
		/	/	OF		FIRST		/	/	OF
CANDIDATENO.		CANDIDATE NAME		O	D	BIRTH	YEAR	CANDIDATE'S	SIGNATURE	
102 19 999 001		FOLOKO ABITI		19	0	01/01/2000	2019			
102 19 999 002		LIKONGOLO APUNA		19	0	02/08/2002	2019			
101 19 999 003		KATEMANGU MJOMBA		19	0	03/03/2001	2018			
101 19 999 004		LIGANGA ABUJE		19	0	19/07/1998	2019			
101 19 999 005		UGALI WANGAMALA		19	0	20/05/2000	2019			
CENTRE TOTALS										
NO. OF BOYS = 3										
NO. OF GIRLS = 2										
TOTAL NO. = 5										

CANDIDATES SHOULD VERIFY THEIR DETAILS ON NOMINAL ROLL

the errors had been committed during registration and were typographical in nature. This discovery was contrary to MANEB'S expectation. MANEB'S assumption was that during registration, candidates had been given an opportunity to check and verify their details as per instructions in the circular letters that were sent to schools detailing the registration process and schedules.

Some candidates, especially MSCE external candidates, might not have even taken heed of the calls and reminders to go and verify their details on nominal rolls.

Consequently, they realised on the day of the examination that their examination numbers were missing on the attendance registers for subjects that they had purportedly registered for. Worse still, after release of examination results some candidates wrote MANEB demanding grades for subjects they did not register for and others made requests for name change or spelling correction so that their names match those on other documents in their possession. This definitely calls for justification and raises some suspicions on why someone should ask for name correction after the release of examinations results.

What is needed is a tude change among candidates and school administrators. Candidates must learn that it is important to follow instructions and stick to deadlines to avoid causing inconveniences to oneself. School administrators must make a deliberate effort to allow candidates to physically check the correctness of their particulars during registration and on the nominal rolls. The inconveniences that arise from such a laissez faire attitude are more grave than those caused by sparing time to check the correctness of one's details on nominal roll, that is to say a stitch in time saves nine!

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES AT MANEB

By RF LUNGU

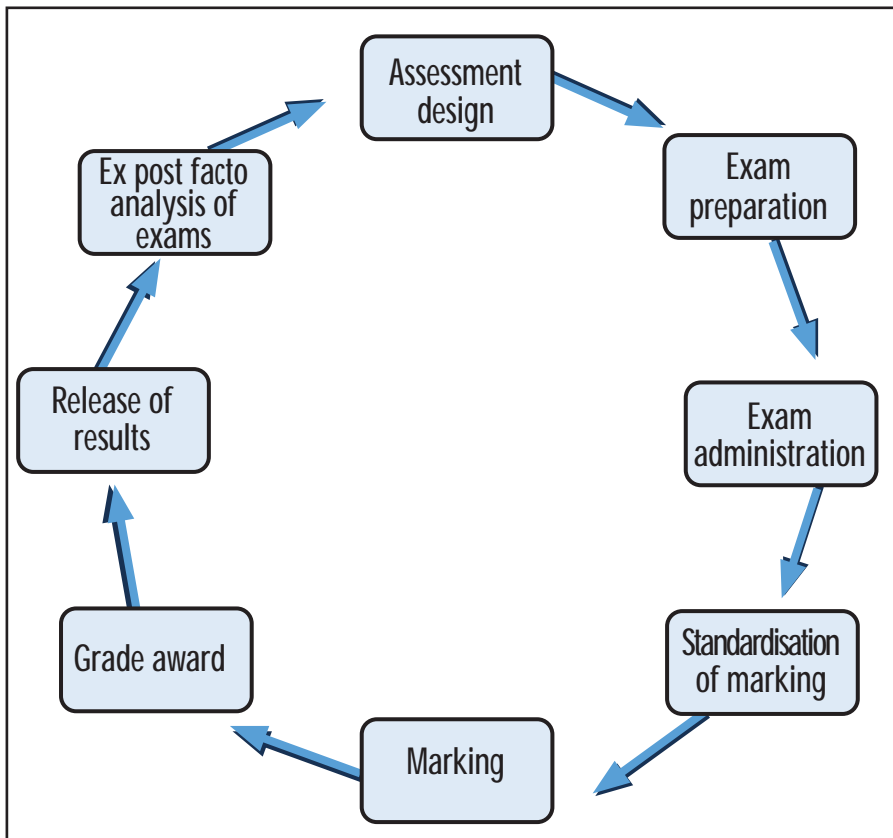
A good test measures what is intended, as set out in the subject syllabus, and does not favour particular groups of candidates.

In assessment, predictability is a challenging issue. To overcome this, MANEB ensures that each examination that candidates take requires them to tackle tasks that are in some way different from what they have done before. This is to avoid negative backwash effects from teaching to the test, while at the same time making sure that the examinations are comparable to those of the previous years.

Each examination consists of different types of questions based on Bloom's taxonomy and has the ability to distinguish candidates. Some tasks require candidates to recall and others demand creativity to apply what they know in a new context, rather than just allowing a mere restating of knowledge and ideas.

MANEB also puts a lot of effort into the preparation of marking schemes to ensure that they are clear and minimize the possibility of examiners approaching the marking differently. Marking schemes serve as the main tools in

communicating to examiners what is expected from candidates. The marking schemes that MANEB prepares are much more than just a set of model answers. They provide guidance on how to mark common alternative approaches that candidates might adopt in answering a question. Marking schemes also stipulate how to deal with common occurring errors or misconceptions that candidates might show. To ascertain that a candidate's score is not dependent on which examiner marks their work, MANEB uses the Conveyor Belt System (CBS) of marking. This

STAGES OF ASSESSMENT CYCLE AT MANEB

approach increases reliability and credibility of results.

After each marking session, markers in each paper/subject discuss their marking experiences and compile a report called the Chief Examiner's report. The report covers several aspects such as candidates'

performance on each component of a test paper by outlining; where candidates performed well and seemed less capable. The report also highlights systematic misconceptions of the subject and provides suggestions on better teaching and learning methods that can

help improve performance. The Chief Examiner's report further gives subject teachers advice on how they can re-orientate their teaching strategies to enhance students' learning and performance.

In its quest to support teaching and learning, MANEB makes Chief Examiners' reports available to all stakeholders. The reports are electronically sent to schools through District Education Offices. Teachers are, therefore, encouraged to make every effort to access these reports.

The above diagram demonstrates the stages of the assessment cycle, which is a continuous circular flow of activities and as such is intended to benefit from continuous improvement. At MANEB we use the model above to ensure that the focus of assessment, which is to provide valid grades to candidates, is met. Our conviction is that learning from our experiences during the assessment cycle can improve future examinations and the models we use to assess candidates.

STRIVING FOR FAIR TESTING PRACTICES

By RF Lungu-Chief Examinations Logistics Officer

Fairness in testing implies; absence of bias, equitable treatment of test takers, equality in outcomes, an opportunity to learn the rights and responsibilities of test takers. MANEB strives to make tests fair for test takers of different gender, ethnic backgrounds, geographical, cultural spread of the schools and handicap conditions.



RF LUNGU-
Chief Examinations
Logistics Officer



Fairness is also achieved through the passing on of necessary information to the right people. MANEB, therefore, uses different platforms to communicate necessary examination information to candidates, school administrators and the public. Information regarding examination registration period and procedures is passed on through circular letters, internet, radio and newspaper advertisements.

Before implementing the new curriculum, MANEB furnishes schools and other stakeholders with the necessary information, such as, coverage of the test and type of question formats. This information is made available to all test takers through sample papers which are dispatched to approved examination centres a year before the administration of the examination. The purpose is to ensure that practicing teachers as well as students are acquainted with the new format and the scope of the test before they face the examination.

It is a known fact that experiments require a certain minimum infrastructure such as a laboratory with some basic equipment and consumables on a recurring basis. Assessment of practical skills in a sound and objective manner is by no means an easy task. Lack of appropriate infrastructure has resulted in the unfortunate neglect of experimental work in some of the schools. It is with this understanding that MANEB promotes activity and experimental based learning by ensuring that science practical examination papers do not demand costly equipment or other unrealistic requirements.

In view of the critical importance of practical examinations, great care is taken during the formulation of the examinations to ensure that the examination papers are fair, realistic and do not cause hardship to any student or school. Questions in science practical papers demand materials that are locally found and, therefore, the administration of some papers, such as Agriculture and Biology, does not require several sessions. It is our conviction that these initiatives are an important step not only to give practical lessons their due place in science subjects but also to promote the culture of conducting practical examinations in schools.

MANEB sends, a list of materials, chemicals and equipment for MSCE science subjects such as Agriculture, Biology, Chemistry and Physics to all examination centres that offer these subjects. The list is normally sent six months before administration of the examination for them to prepare.

Special Needs candidates are provided with appropriate forms of tests such as Braille papers for visually impaired candidates and large print examinations for Low Vision candidates. Special arrangements are also made for appropriate test administration procedures for some of the special needs candidates. Such arrangements include provision of additional time, special invigilators oral examinations and scribes for candidates that are not capable of writing.

To ensure fairness in the marking of candidates' scripts MANEB uses a conveyor belt system (CBS) of marking where double data entry whereby a candidate's script is scored and entered by more than one person.

MANEB holds awards meeting, which is a process of awarding grades to candidates. At MSCE level the meetings are attended by Chief Examiners, officials from Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and external examiners from examining institutions within East, Central and Southern Africa. During awards meetings Chief Examiners provide most of the information regarding the validity of the examination papers and their comparability with previous papers, the conduct of the marking exercise and the students' qualitative performance. Officials from the MoEST and MIE are invited to these meetings to get first-hand information on policy and curriculum issues that need to be addressed. The presence of external examiners adds to the credibility of MSCE certificates in Malawi and beyond.

During the release of examination results, the public is informed through a Press Release. Among others, the press release states out components of performance according to gender and Special Needs learners. The statement also stipulates number of candidates whose results have been

withheld for contravening examination regulations. Furthermore, the press release makes provision for submission of results queries and the deadline for receiving such queries, which is normally one month from the date of release of results.

The MSCE notification of results slip, which is issued to every candidate through their respective examination centre, shows grades obtained and provides information on what each grade denotes.

To inform schools about candidates' qualitative performance in specific subjects, MANEB electronically sends PSLCE and MSCE Chief Examiners' reports to key stakeholders and to schools through District Education Managers Offices. This is done to enable teachers make observations on specific problematic areas to candidates requiring teachers' attention.

In most cases factors that Chief Examiners attribute to candidates' performance remain untested and anecdotal. Therefore, without a scientific study, it is not possible to single out the issues that are responsible for the performance of candidates hence the need for some form of study.

In this regard, MANEB reviews the performance of test takers on free response items by studying their scripts after the examinations have been written, scored and results released. The review aims at finding out the performance of examinees on each item and suggesting possible causes for the same by focusing on three indexes; the difficulty, the discrimination and the reliability. Results from such studies feed into subsequent examinations.

MANEB also conducts field studies on performance of candidates in examinations to validate information contained in Chief Examiners' reports, which is based on the marking exercise.

MANEB will continue to provide examination services that promote fairness and equitability by having necessary measures in place, sending essential communication to schools and providing the required support to SNE candidates to address their test taking needs. These efforts are in line with MANEB'S core values of equitability and fairness.

INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM IN THE PROCESSING OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

By **Mayamiko Chiwaya**

MANEB applies its core values in all examination procedures, including marking and processing of the results.

For both Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education (PSLCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations, markers are drawn from all the 34 Education districts in the country. PSLCE markers are identified by District Education Managers (DEMs) through the District Select Committees. For MSCE marking, teachers apply stating their qualifications, subjects of specialization, and years of teaching experience,

among others.

The process of marking starts with training of the markers and this is done by MANEB officers with the help of Chief Examiners. After the training, Chief Examiners take charge of the rest of the marking processes. MANEB practices the conveyor belt system (CBS) of marking. Allocation of the markers to the marking belts is done by Chief Examiners. The CBS approach increases the reliability and credibility of results.

Candidates' scores are transferred from the script into computers by data entry clerks and this is

done right in the rooms where marking takes place. The score for each candidate is entered twice by two different data entry clerks. A computer programme matches the two entries to make sure that the scores entered are indeed correct. After completion of the data entry, security personnel carry out random data checks to validate the entered scores against those shown on the candidates' scripts. This is done to ensure that the scores captured into the computer reflect scores indicated on the script, making MANEB accountable for the candidates' scores.

After validation of scores by MANEB security personnel, data files are locked and the only people that can have access to the files are designated computer programmers who have access rights. However, any entry into the files leaves an audit trail.

Assigning of grades to scores is done during awards meetings. PSLCE awards meetings are attended by MANEB officials, Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) and

Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) officials. Attendees to MSCE awards are drawn from all the aforementioned institutions including Chief Examiners (CEs) and External Examiners. During the awards meetings, Examinations Development Officers (EDOs) give a comprehensive analysis of candidates' performance and this is collaborated by qualitative reports from CE reports. Decisions on cut scores are guided by reports from EDOs and CEs. Determination of the cut scores is done using print outs that display national mark distribution graphs, which give a holistic picture of all scores at national level for all subjects. Decisions that are made on cut scores are unanimously agreed and signed for by the awards committee members. MANEB keeps a record of such decisions for future reference.

After the awards meeting, the Board of Directors holds a meeting to consider and approve the results. PSLCE results are submitted to MoEST for selection, after which they are further submitted to government for approval. Announcement of results is done after government approval.

EXAMINATIONS SECURITY AGREEMENT BETWEEN MANEB AND SECURITY AGENTS



The former Police Inspector
GENERAL, MR RODNEY JOSE
and
MANEB Executive Director,
MR GERALD CHIUNDA
signing the
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
(MoU)

By **Mayamiko Chiwaya**

Security is paramount in the entire processing and administration of national examinations hence the need to engage security agents.

To mitigate security challenges during administration of national examinations and assure provision of security personnel for the examinations, every year

MANEB enters into a pact with national security agents; Malawi Police Service and Malawi Prison Services. For 2019 examinations the signing of the agreement took place in Zomba and Lilongwe, respectively. This was done prior to the administration of the examinations.

In the picture above the

former Police Inspector General, Mr Rodney Jose and MANEB Executive Director, Mr Gerald Chiunda are signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 2019 examinations security arrangements.

MANEB PRESENTS TWO PAPERS AT *2019* AEAA CONFERENCE

"Innovations in Educational assessment"



By **Fannie Chilunga**



Fannie Chilunga- Senior Examinations Development Officer

MANEB is a member of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA), an organization that was established to promote cooperation amongst examining and assessment bodies in Africa. Members meet annually to discuss issues and share information on best assessment practices for attaining academic and moral excellence to promote sustainable human resource development for Africa and the world at large.

The 2019 annual conference was hosted by the West African Examinations

Council (WAEC), at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja – Nigeria from 5th to 9th August, 2019. The conference theme was: Innovations in Educational Assessment. Research papers were presented and deliberated on under the following six sub-themes:

- Assessment for and of teaching and learning;
- ICT and innovative educational assessment;
- Innovative assessment for quality education;
- Prospects and challenges in computer based assessment;
- The role of ICT in curbing examination malpractice;
- Assistive and adaptive technologies for educational assessment for learners with special needs.

MANEB attended the conference and was represented by: **Mr Gerald Chiunda – Executive Director**; **Mrs Betty Zimba (Principal Examinations**

Logistics Officer); **Mrs Fannie Chilunga (Senior Examinations Development Officer)** and **Mr Francis Luhanga (Examinations Logistics Officer)**.

MANEB made two presentations as follows: 'Causes of candidates' poor performance in Mathematics at PSLCE Examinations' and 'Mantel-Haenszel Analysis of Gender Differential Item Functioning (DIF) in Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Computer Studies Examination Items'.

The presentation on PSLCE Mathematics was made by Fannie Chilunga and the focus was on an analytical study that was undertaken to determine the causes of poor performance of candidates in PSLCE Mathematics in Malawi and factors that contribute to the poor performance. The analysis was premised on the fact that MANEB exercises care and diligence in developing test questions to ensure that they are fair for students who have done the eight years of learning at primary school level. Despite the examinations being fair, MANEB's

statistics show low performance of many candidates in Mathematics making it imperative to find factors responsible for such performance so that necessary measures are taken to address the problem. This is in view of the fact that Mathematics is one of the enviable subjects in life and a foundation to other science subjects which are fundamental to the development of Malawi (Sait, 2007).

The presentation highlighted a number of causes of the poor performance, among them; candidates' failure to convert units, giving wrong/incomplete responses to questions that require application of mathematical concepts, wrong interpretation of mathematical terms, failure to draw or use graphs and tables and inability to construct geometrical shapes.

The presentation further showed that; lack of practice to master the content for the syllabus, poor Mathematical background knowledge, lack of drawing skills (manipulative skills), poor comprehension of Mathematical language, failure to relate Mathematical concepts to real life situations, inadequate coverage of the syllabus and lack of teaching and learning materials are the major factors that contribute to the poor performance in

PSLCE mathematics. To address these problems the presentation recommended interventions on learners' acquisition and practice of basic knowledge and skills in Mathematics at lower sections of primary school education.

The presentation on 'Mantel-Haenszel Analysis of Gender Differential Item Functioning (DIF) In Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) Computer Studies Examination Items' was made by Betty Zimba.



Betty Zimba - Former Principal Examinations Security Officer

Betty's presentation was based on a re-examination of gender Differential Item Functioning (DIF) in MSCE Computer Studies examination items using a Classical Test Theory (CTT)

by Mantel-Haenszel (MH) DIF detection procedure to enhance the validity of examinations. The presentation showed that category 'B' and 'C' DIF magnitude was detected in 3 out of 34 items analysed representing 8.82%. Out of the detected items, 66.67% had uniform DIF whereas 33.33% had non-uniform DIF. Both items with uniform DIF disadvantaged females. It was recommended that examining boards should consider adopting gender DIF analysis to enhance examination quality.

From the presentations and deliberations at the conference it was observed there was need to embrace innovative ideas in assessment to improve the quality of education. It was further noted that technological innovations in education assessment were indispensable and a vital tool for curbing examination malpractices. Member institutions were also encouraged to continue to explore means of addressing threats of ICT to educational assessment and advocate for test assistive technologies in assessment so that candidates with special needs are not disadvantaged.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

"HAPPY TO LISTEN
TO YOU AND
SERVE YOU".



By **Mayamiko Chiwaya**

Good customer service enhances the public image of an institution and is an important aspect for the good reputation and success of any organisation, firm or company. For any institution that is meeting the needs of its customers, there is a positive reward. The rewards include mutual trust and customer satisfaction, which attracts more customers. As one way of offering satisfactory services to the Malawian populace, MANEB has so far introduced a number of innovations to serve its clients better.

As a response to the needs of assessment related services from clientele in other parts of the country, in 2018 MANEB expanded its operations to other

regions of the country. On 1st July 2018 the first ever regional office was officially opened in the northern region by Mr R.Z Agabu, the Director of Inspectorate and Advisory Services in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The northern region office is located at Luwingu.

Three months later, the Central Region office was opened in Lilongwe Area 3 within the premises of Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). Both regional offices are fully operational and services offered at the offices include receiving examination results queries, candidates' registration data and Identity card forms. The regional offices also receive applications for certificates replacement,

certificates by accumulation and transcripts, among others.

In this regard, our clients based in the two regions no longer have to cover the long distance to the Zomba head office to acquire a service that could cost less than their transport fare.

To keep a record of services rendered to our clients, a client tracking system was introduced at the Head Office in January 2018. The system records such information as clients' particulars, contact details, type of service they require and duration taken to render a service. The tracking system has helped enhance accountability in service provision among MANEB employees.



Regional Office North

The Regional Manager (North)
The Malawi National Examinations Board,
P.O. Box 20289, Mzuzu.
MALAWI



Regional Office Centre

The Regional Manager (Centre)
The Malawi National Examinations Board,
P.O. Box 130, Lilongwe.
MALAWI



Head Office

The Malawi National Examinations Board
P.O. Box 191, Zomba.
MALAWI
Tel: +265 1 525 277 / 1 525 212
Email: maneb@sdnp.org.mw

SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGN

"INFORMATION IS POWER"

By **Mariagoret Sikanda**



Mariagoret Sikanda-
Intern in PRMs Office

MANEB has an in-house drama group, comprising MANEB staff, which preaches against examination malpractices. Every year the group tours some parts of the country to sensitize teachers, candidates and the public on proper conduct during national examinations. For 2019 examinations preparations, the drama group embarked on a similar tour reminding candidates and teachers the evils of examination malpractices and urging them to join the fight against the vice.

The drama performances covered several topics such as; preparations for 2019 science practical examinations, checking of nominal rolls, the role of community in anti-cheating campaign, penalties for examination malpractices,

candidates conduct before and during examinations.

As a way of engaging candidates who are usually the main culprits in malpractices, the host schools were given a chance to prepare messages on examination vices through poems, songs, traditional dances and comedies, among others. This was done before a play by MANEB drama group which brought out serious examination issues through some comical performances. At every venue the audience was thrilled in the manner the drama group exposed some of the irregularities committed by candidates and those entrusted with the responsibility of administering examinations. The drama group gave guidance on the right

conduct for all those involved in national examinations.

Apart from the drama performances, MANEB put across anti-cheating messages on electronic media such as radios and televisions in order to reach the wider audience.

We salute District Education Managers (DEMs) for cooperating with us in identifying performance venues and contacting the host schools prior to our visit. We are also grateful to the teachers and candidates for the good rapport exhibited during the time of our tour in their various localities. This is evident in the way they patronized and participated in the sensitization activities. Indeed, united we stand, divided we fall!



MANEB drama group on anti-cheating campaign

IMPROVING EFFICIENCY THROUGH TEAM BUILDING

Mariagorret Sikanda

MANEB has a workforce of about 200 and all with one accord 'to preserve the integrity of national examinations through provision of quality assessment'. Among the workforce are, directors, technicians, human resource personnel and support staff who rely on one another to fulfil MANEB's mandate. In this regard, issues of team building are paramount.



Mr EL Thindwa facilitating a team building workshop for MANEB officers at Hapuwani court in Mulanje

To enhance the institution's efficiency in service provision MANEB held the first ever team building workshops in February and March 2019 at Hapuwani Court at the base of Mulanje Plateau for its head of office employees. Regional offices staff attended a similar workshop on April 2019 at Chikho lodge in Kasungu.

In his opening speech MANEB Executive Director, Mr Gerald Axel Chiunda, highlighted the need for MANEB to strategically reposition itself in terms of improving service delivery to achieve

the institution's vision of being a highly reputable, credible, leading and competitive examining body in Malawi.



The ED and management team with officers from Regional Offices at Chikho Lodge in Kasungu for team building workshop

The facilitator, Mr Ernest Thindwa took the employees through a process of reflection on how they relate with one another. He also dwelt on features of effective and dysfunctional teams. Officers received tips on how to create great winning teams and noted that, overall, the building of great winning teams rests on good interpersonal relationships. Overall, members were reminded that a team becomes great when its members have a shared mission, vision and goal.

With the knowledge and skills acquired during the team building workshops it is anticipated that performance and output of MANEB employees will greatly improve. The workshop was in line with the performance management system that the institution will be implementing shortly.

INTER-EXAM AGENCY SPORTING ACTIVITIES

By **Mariagorret Sikanda**

Processing and administration of national examinations is hectic and stressful. It is commonly believed that travelling improves the general wellbeing of a person and, therefore, a good way to relieve stress. At the end of the examination cycle, MANEB, has since 2018, been arranging trips for its members of staff to neighbouring countries.

In 2019 MANEB management organised a trip for its ninety employees to Zimbabwe for inter-exam sporting activities with the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC). The aim of the trip was to accord members of staff an opportunity to play games against a foreign team and give a chance to employees who have less chances of travelling abroad on their own to experience life beyond the borders. The trip was also another occasion for MANEB staff to interact with ZIMSEC counterparts in terms of sharing work experiences.

MANEB staff left for Zimbabwe on two buses on 29th of August and returned home on 1st of September,

2019. This trip was full of fun and rich interactions making it one of the most memorable.

The warm welcome by Nicky Ndhlamini, the ZIMSEC Public Relations Manager at Nyamapanda border post made MANEB personnel feel home although it was miles away from Malawi and more miles to Harare. The two institutions featured football, netball, volleyball and chess. MANEB team lost the unfamiliar sack run which turned out to be the most entertaining sporting activity. The atmosphere was electric and everyone supported one another.

The hospitality in Zimbabwe included an excursion to some places of interest, meals and entertainment by a live band, which spiced the dinner that was hosted in honour of MANEB staff. Commenting on the trip, MANEB staff members acknowledged that the hospitality by ZIMSEC and at the hotel was amazing. They thanked MANEB management for organising the trip which they would live to remember.



MANEB social football team



MANEB sisters versus ZIMSEC sisters

OUR STORIES IN PICTURES

As a professional body, MANEB carries out its activities in a transparent manner and engages a number of stakeholders. Here is a summary of some of the activities in pictures



Participants during a working session at a workshop for development of Examinations Management Policy (EMP) at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe



Participants to the 2019 Memoranda workshop, the second in the history of MANEB



The ED addressing 2019 Examinations Administrators at the official opening of the 2019 Examinations administration briefing session



Mr D.C Yadidi, the retired Deputy Executive Director for MANEB, speaking to MANEB staff at a farewell function for retirees



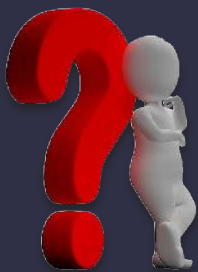
External examiners and MANEB staff on an excursion in Mangochi after 2019 MSCE awards and standard fixing meeting



Malawi Police Brass Band leading a march during the launch of MANEB's Strategic Plan on 20th December 2017. This remains one of MANEB's most memorable occasions



Attendees to the 2019 SAAEA research forum during an excursion at Livingstonia Beach in Salima



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q 1. How can I report examination malpractices?

A. MANEB welcomes information from whistleblowers. You can call us using our landlines or mobile phones. You can also write us or send an email to maneb@sdnp.org.mw

Q 2. Can I register for examination at one centre and write the examination at another centre?

A. No, you cannot. Once you register at a centre you sit for the examination at the same centre.

Q 3. Can I change my name or insert another name on a certificate?

A. Once a certificate is produced, MANEB does not have the mandate to change names, insert new names or initials on certificates.

Q 4. How can I get an academic transcript?

A. Transcripts are issued when an individual requests MANEB to provide information on how he/she passed in any of the examinations that we administer. Below is the procedure:

1. An individual fills transcript application Form which requires name, examination number, school(s) attended, subjects passed and their grades, contact details of the addressee of the transcript e.g. postal address, email address
2. The transcript is addressed to the employer/organisation (as indicated in 1 above)
3. The Transcript carries MANEB seal for

authenticity.

4. The Transcript is wax-sealed and sent to the employer/organisation in question.
 - Processing fee is as follows: **MK5, 000.00** for local use transcript and **MK10, 000.00** for international use transcript. (Processing fee will be determined from time to time by MANEB).

Note: We encourage applicants to send their transcripts themselves as MANEB does not shoulder posting charges. Applicants are further warned against opening the wax-sealed envelope because doing so invalidates the transcript.

Q 5. Does MANEB equate certificates?

A. Yes, we do for certificates issued by us. The application procedure is like that of academic transcript. Processing fee is **20USD or an equivalent of the same in our local currency.**

Q 6. How can I get a notification of results slip?

A: A notification of results slip is a document which MANEB prints in triplicate for every candidate who sits for MANEB national examinations. This document is meant to be used while waiting for the processing of a certificate. MANEB delivers notification of results slips to District Education Manager (DEMs) Offices from where examination centres (schools) collect. This being the case, candidates do not have to come to MANEB to collect their notification of results slips as they collect them from their respective schools for free. However, if a candidate comes to MANEB and requests that we reproduce a notification of results

slip for him or her—instead of collecting from their school—we process it at a fee of K5,000 per triplicate (Processing fee will be determined from time to time by MANEB).

Q 7. What is the procedure for replacing a lost or damaged certificate?

A: In the event that a certificate is lost or damaged, a certifying statement will be issued upon submission of application. The applicant must indicate all contact details, including phone numbers of the applicant, and be submitted together with:

- Police Report;
- School Reference or Testimonial from the school where an individual got the certificate or a letter from the District Education Manager, if the school is no longer operating;
- Reference from a notable or well-known person such as Member of Parliament (MP), Doctor, Reverend, Chief, Magistrate etcetera, testifying that he/she knows the applicant personally
- A national Identity card.
- Payment of processing fee of **K10,000** to be deposited in **MANEB's National Bank Account No. 1123688 – Zomba Branch**. Payment is done after the vetting of the application hence the need for applicant to indicate contact details in the application. (Processing fee will be determined from time to time by MANEB).

The applicant should, then, hand-deliver all these documents in person to MANEB Offices, Of Malemia Road, Next to Old Parliament Building in Zomba. Applicants based in the Northern and Central Regions of the country are encouraged to submit their applications to our Mzuzu and Lilongwe Regional Offices, respectively. An application made through a third person will be rejected.

Processing takes at least two weeks, all things being

equal, hence applicants who need documentation urgently should process an Academic Transcript.

When processing is done, MANEB will contact the applicant using contact details indicated on the application letter. The applicant should come with a valid identification document i.e. National Identity card to collect the certificate.

Q 8. My certificate got damaged. Is it possible to have it replaced?

A: You apply for replacement. The processing fee is currently K10,000 but is to be revised from time to time by MANEB. The application shall comprise; application letter, a copy of the damaged certificate and a national ID. In certain circumstances we may also require a police report and reference letter from your former school.

Q 9. I have more than one certificate, is it possible to merge them into one by choosing the best subjects only?

A: No, it is not. Once a candidate manages to qualify for the award of a certificate in one examination sitting, that certificate cannot be changed.

This notwithstanding, a candidate is free to re-write any number of subjects as he/she wishes. At MSCE level, if the subjects re-written are less than those required to qualify for a certificate, they will be issued with a Notification of Results slip to be used together with their certificate. Alternatively, one could be applying for an academic transcript which could chronicle all the subjects passed and including respective years of passing.

If a candidate writes enough subjects and qualifies for the award of a certificate, he/she will be awarded a certificate but he/she should choose a better one and surrender the other to MANEB to be destroyed.

Q 10. I have more than one certificate and use just one. Can I donate the remaining certificates to my relation?

A: No, you cannot. Otherwise it is a crime, punishable

by law

Q 11. My brother is dead but had a very good MSCE. Could I be using it?

A: No. This is a crime as it breaches Section 360 of the Penal Code which criminalises uttering/tendering of false document. Those found to be engaging in this malpractice will be arrested and prosecuted in a court of law.

Q 12. I have been writing examinations more than once but I haven't been able to get a full certificate. Is there any way out?

A: Yes, you may apply for a Certificate by Accumulation. This certificate is produced when a candidate, who fails to pass enough subjects to qualify for the award of MSCE in a single examination sitting, qualifies for the same in several but not more than four consecutive examination sittings i.e. from 2010 to 2013; 2011 to 2014; 2012 to 2015, 2019 to 2022 e.t.c as long as it is within a four-year bracket of the same curriculum.

Q 13. I sat for 2017 & 2018 MSCE examination but wasn't able to get a full certificate. I also sat for 2019 MSCE examination, and passed a few subjects. Am I eligible to apply for certificate by accumulation using grades from previous examinations and the 2019 examination?

A: No, you can only accumulate grades from examinations within the same curriculum.

Q 14. I sat for 2019 MSCE examination but did not pass. I have registered for 2020 examination using a different name. I would like to combine the 2019 grades and those to be obtained in 2020 to apply for certificate by accumulation. Shall this be possible?

A: No, you needed to maintain the same names otherwise our system will recognize you as two different individuals and, therefore, shall not be able to produce a certificate by accumulation for

you.

Q 15. After I have met requirements for certificate by accumulation, will MANEB automatically produce a certificate by accumulation for me?

A: No, you fill some forms at our offices or write a letter applying for "Certificate by Accumulation" to:

The Executive Director

MANEB

Box 191

Zomba

E-mail: maneb@sdnp.org.mw

In the letter, explain that you have satisfied the conditions for the award of a certificate by giving details such as: years when you sat the examinations, schools attended, examination numbers and grades obtained.

NOTE: Your application will be vetted after which you will be advised to pay a processing fee, of K10,000. The fee is subject to revision from time to time by MANEB. You can pay cash at our head office or deposit in our account and send us a copy of the deposit slip. If you are in the Northern or Central region drop your application together with the deposit slip at our respective Regional Offices.

Q 16. I have a private school and would like to have an examination centre number. What procedures should I follow?

A: You should

- 1) Have a School Registration Certificate issued by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
- 2) Apply to MANEB for centre inspection
- 3) Pay centre inspection fee (amount to be determined by MANEB from time to time) in MANEB account. MANEB will advise you on the dates for the centre inspection.

Q 17. What other services does MANEB offer?

A: (1) Conducts aptitude testing for identification of suitable trainees and job placement.

(2) Undertakes research in educational assessment

(3) forensic handwriting analysis

(4) Provides metadata for research purposes.

Q 18. If one passes MSCE examination should they come to MANEB offices to collect their Certificate?

A: No, they should not. MANEB sends certificates to candidates' respective schools.