

Participant information sheet for research participants

Project Title: Tikule Limodzi (Let's Grow Together): Improving curriculum and teaching methods to influence policy and increase the quality of ECDE provision for children with disabilities in Malawi

Introduction

We would like to invite you to take part in a study to gain a better understanding of the complex dynamics that can enable or inhibit quality early childhood development and education (ECDE) for children with disabilities in Malawi. This study will provide those involved in providing ECDE services in Malawi a better understanding of how child-based community centres (CBCCs) work in your community. As part of this project we plan to develop and test effective early education centres and promote high quality training for pre-school personnel (caregivers) who are responsible for the care and development of key educational skills of all children, including children with disabilities, between the ages of three and six. The research will be broadly structured in three stages: 1) tool development; 2) tool testing; and 3) tool implementation.

We are particularly interested to know what your experiences are in working with CBCCs and/or supporting families who have children with disabilities in their communities (including child-based community centres). This would involve you taking part in an interview or focus group. It may also mean possibly a workshop with a few other professionals. Before you make your decision, it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read or listen to the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Why have I been chosen?

We are contacting you because you are a parent/carer of a child who attends a CBCC and we hope that you might be interested to take part and you live in the area where the study is taking place.

How much of a time commitment will it take?

Interviews will take up to 1 hour. We may ask you to do one interview OR one workshop, or possibly both an interview AND a workshop. We are planning to hold the interviews and workshops in your local area, at a time that is convenient for you.

What will the study consist of?

The interviews and workshop will be a chance for you to tell us about your experiences accessing CBCCs and other ECDE services in your community. We will use different activities to help the discussion, and it will depend on which ways you think are the best to do this. The people carrying out the study are from Malawi and the UK, and the person doing the interviews and workshops will be Malawian. The interviews and workshops will be conducted in Chichewa.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you whether or not you take part in this study. If you do not wish to take part, then that is fine. You don't have to answer questions should you not wish to, and you can stop taking part in the study at any time without having to tell us why.

How can I withdraw from the study if I no longer wish to take part?

You can withdraw from the study up to seven days after your involvement in an interview or focus group discussion. If you choose to withdraw you do not have to give any reason and your legal rights would be unaffected. You will be reimbursed for any travel and or additional costs you have

spent up to the date of withdrawal. If you wish to withdraw from the study please contact (name) at (institution).

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no serious disadvantages or risks from taking part in this study. Taking part in an interview or workshop will take up some of your time, but you are free to leave if you need to. If there is anything that you find that is upsetting, you are encouraged to tell the researcher if this occurs and they are available if you need to talk about any concerns afterwards.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no immediate benefits in this study, but the information you provide will help us to try and make our interventions in the community more useful and helpful for children with disabilities and their families. We will supply drinks and snacks for the duration of the session.

What if something goes wrong and I want to make a complaint?

If you have any concerns about this study, you should talk to one of the research team who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Chairperson at the National Commission for Science and Technology on (add phone number).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

The information you tell us during the interviews and focus group discussions will be kept confidential. We will expect you to keep everything said by other participants in the workshop confidential too. However, we may need to need to break confidentiality if we were concerned that a child was being harmed. With your consent, discussions will be recorded onto a Dictaphone, and will then be transferred onto a computer with password protection. Once the discussions are written down, they will be deleted from the Dictaphone. All names will be removed from data and replaced by a code, so the information will not be identifiable as you. You can ask to look at the information you provide at any time and can also ask that your information is no longer used.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be shared with people involved in the study including Chancellor College, Sightsavers, the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (Malawi) and the University of Birmingham and UKAID. Results will also be included in articles for publication in scientific journals to share with other professionals. A summary can be provided to you if you would like it.

Who is funding this study?

This study is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Department for International Development in the UK. The researchers will not be receiving personal payments for undertaking this research.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you would like further information on this study please contact (name of person) at (name and address of co-investigating institution) at (mobile number).