

Strengthening the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme through Linking and Learning

CONSOLIDATED RESEARCH REPORT

Institute for Policy Research & Social Empowerment
STOP AIDS NOW!

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**STOP
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NOW!**

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Executive summary

In order to mitigate the economic and psychosocial impact of HIV and AIDS related illness and death of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and their caretakers, four Malawian registered non governmental organisations, NOVOC, CEYCA, YONECO and IPRSE, in partnership with the Chitipa District Assembly have been coordinating their efforts, with support from STOP AIDS NOW! Netherlands in the implementation of a one year project aimed at strengthening the Social Cash Transfer programme in Malawi through linking and learning. The Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE) was therefore charged with the responsibility of leading the processes of conducting a baseline survey and implementing an action research to attain participatory problem identification in the scheme, participatory solution development and participatory impact assessment of key stakeholders in the process from both the state and non-state realms of the society.

The outcomes of the processes have been very encouraging with the partnership making inroads into what was initially seen as a no-go zone for non governmental institutions. The Government has taken into consideration some significant policy positions while compromising on some. This subsequently offers fresh challenges for the partnership to ensure that progress that has been made thus far is sustained while strategizing to overcome challenges for future policy advocacy with particular reference to the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme.

While the Social Cash Transfer Scheme continues to bear observable advantages in terms of improving health of beneficiaries, improving food security, increasing school enrollment rates and reducing child labour, it has also enhanced productivity of beneficiary households and communities, e.g. by accumulation of productive assets and livestock.

On the other hand, just like any other public initiative the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme stands to face challenges in its execution owed to a number of internal and external factors. To this end, this one year project has uncovered several challenges in the Social Cash Transfer Scheme. But as action research entails learning through doing, through the process of quarterly Search Conferences, the research process identified solutions to some of the identified bottlenecks some of which have successfully been executed.

The following were the key challenges uncovered in the research and the subsequent resolutions made:

1. human resource capacity challenges of the District Assembly; resolutions made were a.o. a. training of extension workers, b. taking the district team on a learning trip to other more experienced districts, and c. taking the Social Welfare officer on a study visit to Bangladesh;
2. challenge of sustainability of financial resources; advocacy for government to contribute to the scheme led to an allocation of MK50 million budgetary support to the Social Cash Transfer Scheme;
3. challenge of lower targeting percentage and cut-off point in Chitipa district, then national averages; government will start in 2011 with proportional targeting;
4. limited institutionalized linkages between the Social Cash Transfer Scheme and other social protection instruments in the country; this remains an advocacy challenge;
5. the challenge of (re-)targeting relocated beneficiaries; a case to revisit the graduation process has been submitted;
6. challenges in defining a household and household heads; district regards guardian who resides permanently in the household as the head and thus recipient of the cash transfer, irrespective of sex and age;
7. exclusion of homeless orphans and other vulnerable children; need for re-integration programme identified;

8. challenge of political interference at community level; a more objective selecting method and case management framework are under consideration. Suffice to indicate, this progress has been made possible with the improving working relationship between the civil society community party to the project and the Government at both the district and national level. It is hoped that such a rapport will continue particularly in the development and implementation of the Social Cash Transfer Programme in 2011 and beyond.

Despite the changes that have been made within the project life span, the research has the following recommendations for further improvement of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme:

1. the government should adopt the National Social Support Policy to provide a legitimate framework for budget support to the Social Cash Transfer Scheme;
2. government should further build the capacity of all implementing bodies at district and national level;
3. deliberate measures should be put in place to link the Social Cash Transfer beneficiaries to other social protection interventions;
4. regular monitoring and evaluation of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme should be put in place;
5. targeted percentage has to be determined per district;
6. amounts transferred need to be revisited in line with the changing economic landscape.



Acknowledgements

In the challenging expedition that has brought this project into conclusion, IPRSE has enjoyed enormous material, moral as well as technical support and assistance from different organisations and individuals to an extent that we cannot exclusively claim the success that the project is in the course of bearing. The Institute would therefore like to express its profound gratitude and thanksgiving to all partners and allies who continue to render their priceless support towards this cause.

IPRSE particularly extends its thankfulness to STOP AIDS NOW! Netherlands; for their incalculable financial and technical support without which this project would not have even started off. Doortje 't Hart has been particularly supportive during the life span of the project; we extend our appreciation to her and the STOP AIDS NOW! team in Netherlands. Network of Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (NOVOC); who have been coordinating the work, have particularly been awesome. To Cuthbert Nyirenda and Joshua Ainabyona, words fail us. YONECO and CEYCA have in particular completed the formula, giving IPRSE the advantage of working in an organized partnership as we strive to define the policy landscape to the advantage of the disadvantaged in Chitipa and the rest of Malawi. Let's carry on with the good job we have started. Board members and research fellows of the Institute, notably Associate Professor Blessings Chinsinga, Mr. Henry Chingaipe, Mr. Happy Kayuni and Mr. George Vilili, need to be hailed for their timely and unrelenting technical and administrative guidance. The Budget and Finance Committee of the National Assembly, National Assembly Secretariat, UNICEF, The National Working Group on Social Cash Transfers,

The Social Protection Department in the Ministry of Development Planning and Corporation, The National Social Cash Transfer Secretariat in the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare and the National Social Protection Technical Committee also deserve our sincere thankfulness for their technical support as well as cooperation in this very noble mission.

In a very special way, gratitude should go to the Chitipa District Council who have proved to be a very reliable partner during execution of the project. Without their collaboration the project would have lacked an institutional ground to stand on.

Policy making is a political process, in which no one is an island but just part of the whole system. IPRSE could not have therefore come thus far without the support and assistance of such fellow policy stakeholders and entrepreneurs and other allies too numerous to mention. We acknowledge your moral, technical as well as material support.



Kondwani Chikadza, IPRSE

Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CEYCA	Centre for Youth and Children’s Affairs
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPC	Community Social Protection Committee
DTT	District Training Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IPRSE	Institute for Policy Research & Social Empowerment
MEGS	Malawi Economic Growth Strategy
MGDS	Malawi Growth & Development Strategy
MK	Malawi Kwacha (currency)
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MSCTS	Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NOVOC	Network of Organisations for Vulnerable and Orphaned Children
NSNP	National Safety Nets Program
NSNS	National Safety Nets Strategy
SCT	Social Cash Transfer
SCTS	Social Cash Transfer Scheme
SPC	Social Protection Committee
TA	Traditional Authority
YONECO	Youth Network and Counselling



Section A - **Background**



Section A - Background

1.1 Poverty and Vulnerability in Malawi

From the early 1980s Malawi has witnessed poor economic growth and diminishing living standards of her populace. Several studies point to the fuel crisis of the late 1970s and unfavourable policies imposed on developing economies, particularly Structural Adjustment Programmes as advocated by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as causes of the predicament. Adoption of these policies as a conditionality for accessing foreign aid resulted into removal of agriculture input subsidies, increasing cost of living due to devaluation of the domestic currency, rising unemployment rates owed to privatization and commercialization of state entities and generally poor service delivery in key sectors such as health and education due to the government's inadequate capacity to operate efficiently in the new order.

A study commissioned by the Government of Malawi in collaboration with the United Nations in 1998 found that 65% of the citizenry was living below the poverty line, computed at US\$1 per day. A similar survey conducted in 2005, indicated that 52% of the populace was living below the poverty line. Much as at face value the two surveys seem to suggest that progress had been made over the years, a raging debate in policy circles pointed to the fact that the marginal difference might have been prompted by the differences in methodologies that were used during the two Integrated Household Surveys. Statistics indicated that Malawi remained one of the poorest countries in the world despite undergoing significant economic and political

reforms. The country was asserted as one of the poorest countries in the world whether judged by Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, the UNDP's Human Development Index or its Human Poverty Index.

Although the situation had been that devastating, the Government and its development partners had time and again attempted to reduce the severity and depth of poverty in the country by implementing a number of pro-poor public policies and programmes. Amongst them, the most outstanding ones included Vision 2020 in 1998, The Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy which was launched in 2001, and the national Safety Nets Programme launched in 2002. Nevertheless, despite implementation of the aforementioned initiatives, Malawians continue to live in poverty.

1.2 The Road to Social Protection in Malawi

A stock take of initiatives implemented with the primary goal of reducing poverty and vulnerability in Malawi, uncovered that a number of factors contributed to the poor performance of the aforementioned policy interventions. Amongst the critical ones were lack of capacity of the implementing partners particularly government institutions at the district and lower levels. In addition, several studies pointed out to the fact that most of these policies were imposed on the host nation by development partners as a precondition to access foreign aid. These policies were thus adopted with a one size fits all approach as they were imposed on different developing countries regardless of their diverse

political, social and economic backgrounds. Thus Malawi ended up adopting and implementing policies that were developed with no critical reflection on the social, political and economic context within which they were to be employed. The said interventions proved doing the economy more harm than good, a development that further worsened the living standards of the populace despite Government and development partners investing huge sums of monies in the implementation of the same. An Institutional capacity assessment of key policy implementing institutions by IPRSE (2005)¹ indicated serious policy knowledge gaps at district assembly level. The assertion that district officials were expected to implement programmes whose objectives they did not understand led to failure of such programmes in as far as the quest to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the country is concerned. More to this, Chinsinga (2004:4)² singled out lack of one policy to bring about coordination amongst multiple stakeholders in the implementation of poverty reduction initiatives as a critical contributor to the failure of the same. As a result policies and programmes have been implemented in an ad hoc and uncoordinated manner resulting into duplication of efforts in some areas while sidelining others. It was therefore against this background that the Government of Malawi and other stakeholders agreed to set in motion the process of developing the country's first ever National Social Protection Policy aimed at addressing the uncovered problems. Social Protection and Disaster Risk Reduction therefore featured as a theme on its own in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), the successor of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the related Development Assistant

Strategy (DAS). The goal of the social protection chapter within the MGDS framework is "to improve the social-economic indicators for the most vulnerable". This subsequently encompasses the expectation of improved health and nutritional status for children under the age of five, school age children, orphans, pregnant and lactating mothers as well as destitute families (MGSD:2005). In order to provide commitment and guidance for the establishment of meaningful social protection interventions especially in families hosting Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children, the National Plan of Action for Orphans and other Vulnerable Children was institutionalized to be implemented between 2005 and 2009.

1.2.1 The Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme

The National Social Protection Policy, which has subsequently been renamed to National Social Support Policy, proposes a number of social protection instruments aimed at reducing poverty and vulnerability targeting respective categories of the poor and vulnerable as per the findings of the 2005 Integrated Household Survey (IHS2). Much as social protection appears to be a new concept in Malawi, the fact is that several social protection instruments have been implemented in the country by a cross section of stakeholders over time. Nevertheless, there are some instruments that are relatively new in Malawi's context, the most outstanding one being social cash transfers. Much as different stakeholders such as Concern Worldwide had implemented an emergency social cash transfer project in Dowa district before 2005, their geographical scope and project duration was somehow limited, not befitting the definition of social protection but rather creating safety nets.

As such, it was deemed imperative to meaningfully assess the practicability of implementing social cash transfers on a wider scale in Malawi's unique socio-economic context. In April 2006, a methodology for a pilot cash transfer scheme was therefore designed and tested in Mchinji district through operational research and from September onwards, a pilot social cash transfer scheme has been implemented and rolled out to six other districts namely, Chitipa, Likoma, Salima, Mangochi, Machinga and Phalombe.

In order for a household to qualify for the scheme they have to meet two criteria:

- a) Ultra-poor; this means the households are the poorest of the poor and are not able to meet their most urgent basic needs (only one meal per day, not able to purchase essential non-food items like soap, clothing, school utensils, and no valuable assets).
- b) Labour constrained; a household is labour constrained when it has no able bodied household member in the age group 19 to 64 who is fit for work or when it has one household member in the age group 19 to 64 years, who is fit for work, but has to care for more than three dependents.

The objectives of the scheme are to:

- 1. Reduce poverty, hunger and starvation in all households living in the pilot area which are ultra poor and at the same time labour constrained;

- 2. Increase school enrolment and attendance of children living in target group households and invest in their health and nutrition status;
- 3. Generate information on the feasibility, costs and benefits and on the positive and negative impact of a Social Cash Transfer Scheme as a component of a social protection programme for Malawi.

Since inception of the pilot scheme, there have been a number of studies assessing strengths and weaknesses of the scheme in a bid to realize the aforementioned goals. RHVP³ (2008) as well as Miller C, Tsoka M, and Reichert K (2008)⁴ highlight several institutional deficiencies at central government, district assembly and community levels.

Based on the Mchinji Social Cash Transfer Pilot, the following improvements have been observed as advantages of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme⁵:

- Improved health with fewer reported sicknesses among adults and children;
- Greater demand for healthcare for children and adults and higher healthcare expenditures
- Increased expenditure on children's schooling
- Reduction in child labour;
- Significant accumulation of household and productive assets, basic necessities and livestock
- Increased agricultural production with greater food stores;
- Improved food security including higher food expenditures, fewer missed meals, fewer days without adequate food, and greater food diversity.

On the contrary, the following challenges have also been uncovered by similar research such that they must be addressed for effective execution of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme⁶:

- Inadequate oversight by central ministries and District assemblies of the SCTS, resulting in a lack of accountability;
- Skill and management deficits at the district level;
- Challenges in the financial management system; the two major concerns are: (1) delays in moving money from the National AIDS Commission (NAC) to the District and (2) irregularities within accounting files and records.;
- The mechanisms needed to identify measure and prevent fraud, errors and corruption are inadequate;
- The District's monitoring of the financial system and village level activities have been inadequate;
- Instances of corruption among Community Social Protection Committees (CSPC), rather than a corrupt system (76% of recipients are correctly targeted); CSPCs are rarely monitored and, while training of community volunteers is improving, it is still inadequate;
- There are important limitations to the current system of targeting and approvals. One critical limitation is the lack of information on the number of households in villages and the demographic and economic characteristics of these households.

IPRSE (2007)⁷ indicates that lack of formally institutionalized systems of grievance reporting makes it difficult for the community to channel their objections and complaints to the decision makers, resulting in prolongation of malpractices and ill-systems in the scheme. As such, much as it needs to be appreciated that the social cash transfer scheme continues to bear positive results on the lives of beneficiaries and their societies at large, some institutional practices pose challenges in as far as maximum realisation of set goals is concerned.

1.2.2 Strengthening the SCT Scheme through the STOP AIDS NOW! Project

In order to mitigate the economic and psychosocial impact of HIV and AIDS related illness and death of OVC and their caretakers, four Malawian registered Non-Governmental Organisations; NOVOC, CEYCA, YONECO and IPRSE⁸ in partnership with the Chitipa District Assembly have been coordinating their efforts, with support from STOP AIDS NOW! in the implementation of a one year project (2010) aimed at strengthening the Social Cash Transfer programme through linking and learning.

The project envisaged realization of the following outcomes at the end of the year:

- 1. Improved management and implementation capacity of one District to deliver social cash transfers in order to increase the productive capacity of poor and vulnerable households by December 2010;

- 2. Improved national, district and community level commitment and support for the implementation and scale up of the Social Protection Policy and Social Cash Transfers by December 2010;
- 3. Improved linkages between SCTS beneficiaries and other social services (psychosocial support, microfinance, livestock production, education and health services) by December 2010.

The Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE) was charged with the responsibility of leading the processes of conducting a baseline survey and implementing an action research to attain participatory problem identification in the scheme, participatory solution development and participatory impact assessment of key stakeholders in the process from both the state and non-state realms of the society. This report is presenting the findings of this research process.

¹ IPRSE (2005) **Public Policy Knowledge Gaps Study: A Report to Trocaire Ireland**, Lilongwe, Malawi

² Chinsinga B (2004) **Poverty and Vulnerability in Malawi**, A Paper Presented to a Dialoguer Session for Parliamentarians in Malawi; University of Malawi ; Zomba

³ RHVP stands for Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme and is a DFID funded programme aimed at reducing hunger and vulnerability in the SADC region

⁴ Miller C, Tsoka M, and Reichert K (2008). **Operations Report-External Evaluation of the Mchinji Social Cash Transfer Pilot**; Lilongwe, Malawi

⁵ Wahenga Brief number 18, June 2009

⁶ Miller C; Tsoka M; and Reichert K (2008). Operations report. External Evaluation of the Mchinji Social Cash Transfer Pilot. August 2008

⁷ IPRSE (2007) Report on Consultative Process funded by DFID and the World Bank **“Integrating The Voice of People into The Malawi Social Protection Policy Process”**; Lilongwe, Malawi

⁸ See appendix 8 for a profile of the involved organisations



Section B - **Research Methodology**



Section B - Research Methodology

As part of the research component of the project IPRSE has during the year 2010 carried out a total of five activities. These are:

1. A baseline to gauge the state of the SCT Scheme in Chitipa;
2. Three search conferences as part of the action research;
3. One assessment to gauge current and potential programmes to which beneficiaries of the SCT Scheme can be linked to.

IPRSE has also during the year made a presentation of its findings to a cross section of policy stakeholders at Capital Hotel in Lilongwe, before submitting technical submissions to the National Social Cash Transfer Technical Working Group for incorporation into the 2011 SCT programme. This section gives an account of the methodology that was employed in conducting the five key activities of the research.

2.1

Methodology for the Baseline

2.1.1 Data collection

The baseline study used both secondary and primary data. The secondary sources of data included research reports on poverty and vulnerability in Chitipa district, food security, rural livelihoods and those specific to the cash transfer scheme like monthly monitoring reports and operational manuals. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews⁹ and focus group discussions.

Two approaches were used:

- Participatory Vulnerability Analysis when collecting data at community level.
- The Household Economy Approach to food security assessment and vulnerability analysis at household level.

This is a livelihoods based framework for analyzing the way people obtain access to things they need to survive and prosper.

2.1.2 Sampling method¹⁰

For the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions the sampling method was non-probability purposive sampling. Thus information was sought from people that the research team believed could provide the required information. At the district level, key informant interviews were conducted with Assembly officials and the Social Cash Transfer Secretariat. At the community level, focus group discussions were conducted and vulnerability concepts were defined, poverty categories described and the poorest families in the community were identified and mapped out. In-depth interviews were then conducted with household representatives. The selection of the villages from which data

would be collected, was guided by the District Assembly through the Social Cash Transfer desk officer who reported to the members that, SCT was being implemented in two Traditional Authorities, namely; TA Mwaulambia and TA Kameme, with both having had the processes of targeting of beneficiaries done, but with only T.A Mwaulambia having received the transfers. It was thus unilaterally agreed that, both TAs be reached to have comparative results. A village cluster was chosen from each of the two TAs and thirty six households were interviewed from the cluster.

2.1.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the reviews was analyzed using content analysis. The information was categorized according to the major emerging themes. The data from interviews and focus group discussions was processed using Interpretational Analysis. This involved segmenting the data, developing categories, coding the segments, grouping the categories and developing themes from the data. Thus the verbatim transcripts from the interviews were analyzed and themes were developed. This method was opted for because the intrusive unstructured interviews resulted in information that needed organization. Then, all the information was placed under relevant themes and codes. Finally a discussion of the results was carried out. This involved relating findings to the objectives of the study as well as picking peculiar or extreme cases that were not initially targeted by the study.

2.2

Methodology for the Action Research

The action research employed qualitative approach, which enables investigation of the interplay of values in a social phenomenon. This has therefore helped the research team to understand what the key stakeholders in the Social Cash Transfer scheme do, why they do what they do and the values underlying the environment in which they interact.

2.2.1 Data collection

The action research employed a holistic approach to problem-solving, rather than a single method for collecting and analyzing data. These various methods, which are generally common to the qualitative research paradigm, included: in-depth interviews, review of organizational documents, participant observation recordings, and conducting search conferences. Much as the first three tools formed the basis for primary data collection, search conferences have been the main form of the data collection and analysis exercise for the research.

This is owed to its participatory nature that fits rightly within the action research concept.

The Search Conference¹¹

Of all of the tools utilized in action research, the one that has been developed exclusively to suit the needs of the action research approach is that of the search conference, initially developed by Eric Trist and Fred Emery at the Tavistock Institute in 1959. For this particular research project, searching was carried out in a group of the relevant stakeholders at the district level.

The group has been meeting quarterly under social island conditions for 2-3 days. The content has been contributed entirely by the members, with the researchers working as facilitators only. The process involved listing items in the first instance without criticism in the plenary session which were then displayed on flip charts in the room. The material was then discussed in greater depth in small groups and the composite picture checked out in the plenary session. The group then examined the setting of the SCT Scheme in Chitipa against this wider background and then proceeded to constructing a picture of a desirable future of the cash transfer scheme.

2.2.2 Sampling method

The study had three search conferences with the same participants purposely selected both at district and community levels. They comprised of officials from Chitipa District Assembly, Civil Society, Community Based Organisations, Community Social Protection Committees and randomly selected beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme

2.2.3 Data analysis

The data collected from the Search Conferences was processed using Interpretational Analysis. This involved fragmentation of the data, as well as developing categories, coding the fragments, grouping the categories and developing themes from the data. This data was categorized during the search conference. All the information was placed under relevant themes and codes. Finally a discussion of the results was carried out. This involved relating findings to the objectives of the study as well as picking peculiar or extreme cases that were not initially targeted by the Action Research.

2.3 Methodology for the Linkages' Assessment

2.3.1 Data collection techniques

The main goal of this assessment was to strengthen the Social Cash Transfer Programme so that it should be responsive to the current situation and that will present an effective way of reinforcing positive change in the socio-economic development of the country. The major task was therefore to accurately assess the current status of the Programme and discern the barriers, constraints, and challenges that are experienced in terms of linking beneficiaries of the same to other social services. This will facilitate the effective delivery of an integrated strategy for long term management of poverty reduction programmes in the country. The principal data collection techniques that were used are listed below.

(a) Key Informant Interviews¹²

Key informant interviews were carried out at district and community levels. Individuals identified as key informants were projected to have particular insights on issues being researched and investigated. These individuals included the District Commissioner for Chitipa, Director of Planning and Development, District Social Welfare Officer, Community Social Protection Committee Officials, Extension Workers, the civil society, faith community and randomly selected beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Programme¹³. These interviews were carried out on the basis of specially prepared guidelines¹⁴ tailored according to the various levels at which the assessment was carried out. These guides were largely used as prompters in a flexible fashion so as to make the

interviews more conversational while still structured and controlled. The flexible manners in which the interviews were carried out allows for the interviewees to raise additional or complementary issues. The reason is that this interview technique uses open-ended questions that permit unexpected but relevant issues to be followed up with either additional questions or systematic probing. Wherever this happened, these became an integral part of the findings.

(b) Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) provided a very powerful means of eliciting in-depth views of the participants on the research topic especially at the community level. Three FGDs were held, in Kameme, Misuku and Nthalire with each FGD comprising seven men, seven women, three boys and three girls drawn from beneficiary and potential beneficiary households selected by respective Community Social Protection Committees.

Likewise, the FGDs were carried out using specially prepared checklists¹⁵ that were developed on the basis of the research question. These checklists were used to facilitate the discussion of pertinent issues to the assignment while being mindful of the fact that the basic operative rule for FGDs requires that facilitation should, as much as it is practically possible, be kept at the minimum. The FGDs generated nuanced, open-minded and sometimes unexpected responses underlying what participants think but also why they think the way they do.

(c) Search Conferences¹⁶

Some lessons learned from the search conferences that have been conducted in Chitipa under the same project, formed a critical benchmark for understanding significant features in terms of policy linkages

between beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme and the aforementioned programmes.

(d) Literature Review

Literature mainly sourced from the District Welfare Office proved important in uncovering activities of other actors in sectors that can potentially be linked to Social Cash Transfer beneficiaries.

(e) Observations

Observations were a key qualitative data collection instrument. Observations provided the opportunity to observe the implementation approaches and different methodologies used by different stakeholders; the interaction between beneficiaries and benefactors; the communication dynamics between the two and the quality and quantity of goods and services used.

2.3.2 Data Processing and Interpretation

Since the study employed a qualitative approach, the analysis of the data predominantly involved categorising issues according to the recurrent themes that emerged across the various levels of data collection and sampled sites.

⁹ See Appendices 4 and 5 for an interview guide at district level

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 for a detailed list of respondents

¹¹ See Appendix 6 for a detailed guideline of a search conference process

¹² Appendix 3

¹³ See Appendix 1 for a detailed list of respondents

¹⁴ Appendices 2 and 3

¹⁵ See Appendix 7

¹⁶ Ibid



Section C - **Presentation and discussion of findings**



Section C - Presentation and discussion of findings

As indicated, IPRSE has been carrying out an action research exercise for a period of one year aimed at building evidence on the performance of one of the most novel and politically contentious social protection instruments being implemented in the country; the Cash Transfer Scheme. The objective of the research component of the project was to generate knowledge and evidence on the current state of the Scheme and to identify institutional gaps that might form the basis for CSO advocacy initiatives in the process. The research also sought to assess potential programmes where beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer scheme can be linked to.

3.1 Key Parameters of the Cash Transfer Scheme in Chitipa district

In Chitipa the objectives of the SCT Scheme are the same as in the other districts and also the targeted households are the same: the ultra-poor and/or labour constrained households. (see 1.2.1) In 2010 the SCT Scheme targeted 2999 households in Chitipa district.

As per the modus operandi of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme the main institution playing a key role in the Chitipa Social Cash Transfer Scheme is the District Assembly, working in collaboration with Community Social Protection Committees.

At the district level, there is a Social Protection Committee (SPC) which is a sub-committee of the District Executive Committee (DEC). The committee is composed of representatives from the directorates of health, education, social welfare, agriculture and finance. The membership also includes non-state actors: World Vision International, World Relief, National Initiative for Civic Education and Children with Hope and Destiny. The SPC is headed by the

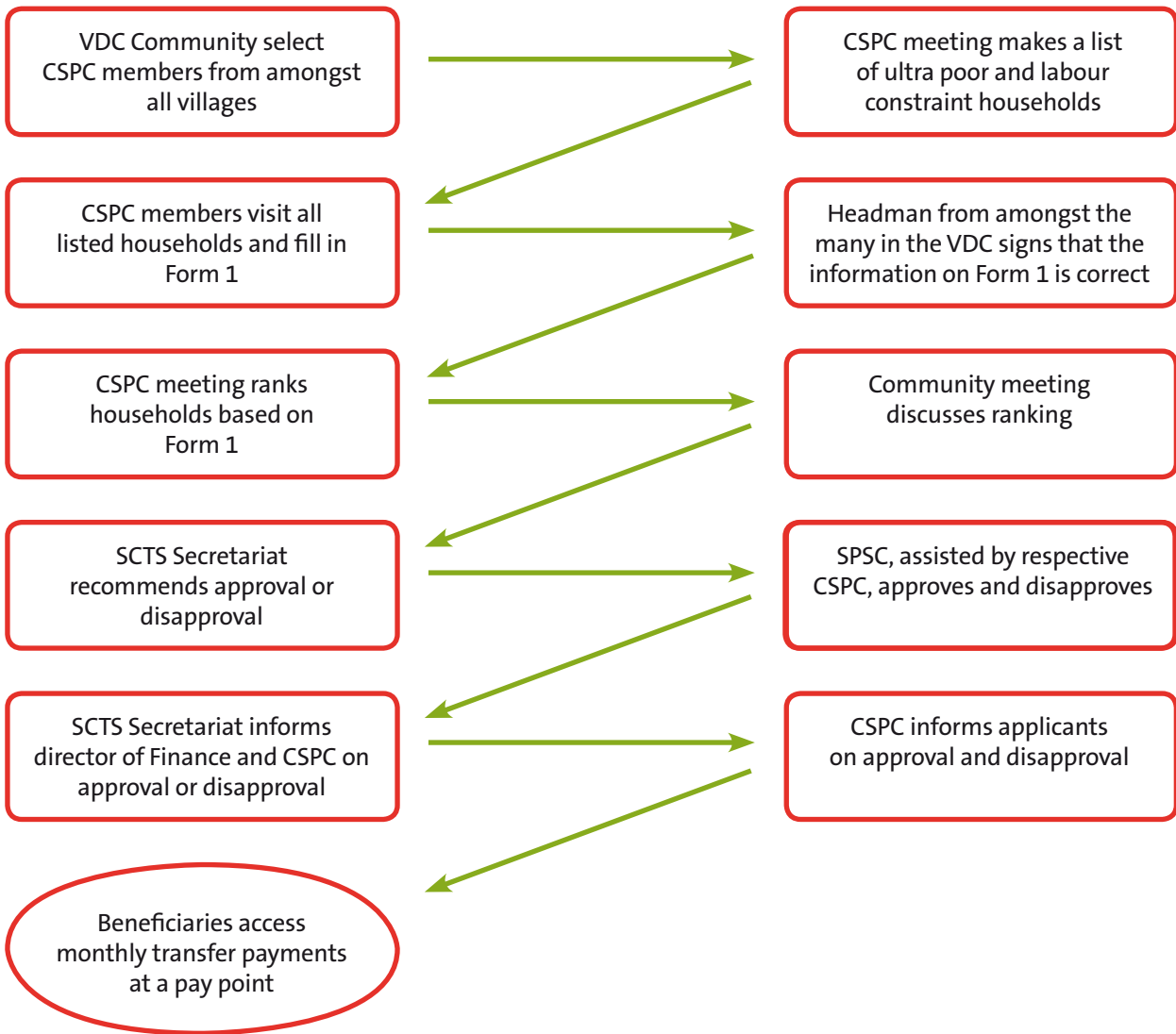
Director of Planning and Development and the main tasks are the supervision of the SCTS Secretariat and approval/disapproval of applicants. Ideally, the SPC seeks to ensure that the scheme is coordinated with other social protection instruments in the programme so as to realise the much needed linkages of beneficiaries of the scheme to other programmes like free primary school education, psycho-social support, school feeding programmes, school bursaries, agriculture input subsidy programme, micro-credit loans etc.

The Secretariat of the SPC is the Social Cash Transfer Scheme Secretariat which is established in the Department of Social Welfare. The Secretariat has four officers: the District Social Welfare Officer, two Assistant Social Welfare Officers and a Social Welfare Assistant. The team works in close liaison with the District Training Team (DTT) that has a membership of six trainers, all of them men.

The DTT is mainly responsible for training communities, monitoring implementation of the scheme and training Community Social Protection Committees (CSPCs) which are elected by the communities to serve as volunteers responsible for overseeing implementation of the scheme at the

community level. The CSPC takes a leading role in targeting of beneficiaries and monitoring changes in household structure that might affect eligibility of the respective household to continue being on the scheme. In figure 1 the flow chart of the Targeting, Approval and Payment process is presented, in which you can clearly see the responsibilities of the various implementors.

Figure 1: Flow Chart of the Targeting, Approval and Payment Process



The following are the levels of the transfers in Malawi at the time of the study:

- **1 person household:** MK 600 / app. 4 USD
- **2 person household:** MK 1,000 / approx. USD 7
- **3 person household:** MK 1,400 / approx. USD 10
- **4 person (and more) household:** MK 1,800 / approx. USD 13

For primary school going children households receive a bonus of MK 200, and for secondary school going children MK 400.

3.2

Key Institutional Challenges and Solutions

On the basis of the aforementioned methodology and study objectives, the search conference process uncovered the following challenges and made subsequent resolutions commensurate with available resources to tackle the same. Some of the resolutions have been executed while others are yet to be addressed.

i. Human resource capacity challenges of the District Assembly

The study uncovered that there are significant human resource capacity gaps at different levels of the scheme. By the end of the day the District Assembly finds it difficult to accomplish their tasks efficiently. For instance, in Chitipa disbursement of funds takes the Assembly eight days which is a very slow rate considering the fact that the Scheme was at that time operational in only one of the five Traditional Authorities. The question that was asked was therefore, “how long would it take the Assembly

to deliver the cash once the Scheme rolls out to all the Traditional Authorities?” The Social Cash Transfer Secretariat, which is essentially the District Social Welfare Office, is also not spared of the human resource capacity gaps. This is more aggravated by the fact that as the district social welfare office they have other responsibilities outside the SCT Framework. As part of the action research entails defining solutions to problems and putting them into effect, a number of resolutions were made to reduce ineffectiveness caused by this problem. These included:

1. Training of extension workers;
2. Taking the Chitipa District team to other more experienced districts to learn how their colleagues are implementing the same Scheme with similar human resource challenges;
3. Supporting the District Social Welfare Officer, whose office is the secretariat for the SCT Scheme at district level, on a study visit to Bangladesh.

As a way of ensuring efficiency, the project also supported the procurement of a computer in the district’s Directorate of Finance and design of an automated database to improve the situation as originally files were kept and accessed manually.

ii. Challenge of sustainability of financial resources

The study uncovered that the Scheme is primarily externally funded, lest for monthly remuneration packages for government officials on the public pay roll. Otherwise the cash that is actually disbursed comes as a grant from the Global Fund through the National AIDS Commission¹⁷. In addition, UNICEF has played an invaluable role

in building the administrative capacity of the implementing stakeholders particularly the District Social Welfare Office which acts as the District Social Cash Transfer Secretariat. This overdependence on donor funds has put into question the sustainability of the Scheme especially if and when the donor organisations are faced with negative externalities. At the time of the study, beneficiaries had stayed for a year without receiving their dues as the Global Fund had not disbursed their allocation to NAC due to among other factors the global financial crisis. In the absence of Government budgetary support towards the scheme this meant no shoulder to lean on for the beneficiaries who are on the scheme. As part of the research component of the project, the project partnership embarked on an advocacy campaign urging the Government to start contributing towards funding the SCT Programme in a more meaningful way. Consequently in the 2010/2011 National Budget, the Government has for the first time allocated MK 50 million budgetary support towards implementation of the scheme. Much as at first value this amount might look little, it should be taken as an important step towards the right direction considering the political economy of Social Cash Transfers amongst key policy stakeholders. More significantly, this call for a more sustainable funding modality has prompted the Government to start redesigning the original funding system towards a basket one, whereby all key stakeholders, including the Government, will be putting their monies together for execution of the Scheme. On a similar note, through the search conference process it was urged that the District Assembly should not limit its options to traditional donors of the SCT scheme in soliciting resources. Consequently,

the Assembly has managed to solicit a vehicle for the implementation of the Scheme, raising the number from one vehicle at the beginning of the project to two, leaving a deficit of one. This will certainly contribute towards a quicker disbursement rate.

iii. Challenge of lower targeting percentage and cut-off point

The study uncovered that the targeted population for the scheme is guided by the findings of the 2005 Integrated Household Survey (IHS2) that asserted that 10% of the Malawi population was ultra-poor. As such, the Social Cash Transfer Scheme is designed in such a way that it targets 10% of the population of each geographical area where the Scheme is being piloted. Consequently, the Scheme targets 10% of the households in each cluster in the district. Consequently, districts with lower poverty levels like Chitipa have inclusion errors while those with higher poverty levels like Mangochi have exclusion errors. As part of technical submissions to the Government¹⁸, the Government has indicated in its programme proposal to the German Government that it will during the year 2011 start employing proportional targeting; whereby each district will be targeting beneficiaries according to the district’s ultra poverty levels as outlined by the Integrated Household Survey number three (HIS 3), whose findings will be ready by then.

iv. Limited institutionalized linkages between the Social Cash Transfer Scheme and other social protection instruments

Just like any other social protection instrument, Social Cash Transfers, single-handedly, are not adequate to fully address the plight of the poor and vulnerable.

To this end, it is recommended that implementation of any social cash transfer programme should be adequately linked to other social protection instruments.

The study uncovered that there is the aspiration to draw policy linkages in the implementation of social protection instruments in Malawi as envisaged in the Malawi National Social Support Policy.

The expectation is therefore that there should be formally institutionalized measures on the ground aimed at linking beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme to other social protection instruments being implemented by a diverse set of stakeholders in the district. However, the study uncovered that there are no deliberate measures whatsoever linking beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme to other social protection programmes being implemented in the district. As common wisdom would dictate, for a family that is deemed labour constrained because of a dependency ratio higher than 1:3, it would be appropriate to support the cash transfers with some productivity enhancing instruments such as the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP), Income Generating Public Works Programmes, Micro Credit Loans etc. so as to give the household some further push out of the ultra-poverty band. Similarly, it would even make more sense to prioritize secondary school going children from beneficiary ultra-poor households when it comes to granting education bursaries at the district level so as to meaningfully contribute towards objective number two of the cash transfer scheme which aims at increasing school enrolment and attendance of children from ultra-poor families. However, it was uncovered that there is no formally or informally institutionalized policy at district level

to provide for such linkages so to meaningfully contribute towards reduction of poverty and increasing school enrolment and attendance. Actually what came out clearly was that beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme are sidelined by the communities when targeting is done for other social protection programmes to ensure “equitable sharing of the public cake”. Hasten to say, some of the beneficiaries have found themselves simultaneously benefiting from other programmes, though not by design. For instance, a cross section of respondents interviewed at household level indicated that they are also beneficiaries of the Farm Input Subsidy Programme. However, this happens coincidentally such that it is actually impossible to get statics to that respect. Much as the District has intervened for inclusion of SCT beneficiaries during targeting of Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme, and has submitted a funding proposal to UNICEF for a psychosocial support programme, neither the Government nor the Civil Society community has made concrete commitment at national and sub-national levels to institutionalize such linkages. This consequently continues to remain an advocacy challenge for policy stakeholders with the aspiration to effectively address the plight of the poor and vulnerable in Chitipa district and beyond.

v. The challenge of (re-)targeting relocated beneficiaries

The study uncovered that since inception of the Scheme in Chitipa district 23 households have been removed from the beneficiary list for various reasons. Out of the 23, 15 were one member households which ceased to exist upon death. Two had relocated from one cluster to the

neighbouring one and the remaining six were removed for various reasons revolving around eligibility criteria.

The problem with relocation to another cluster is that the household cannot be on the beneficiary list in their new cluster up until retargeting has been done. However, since the Scheme started in Mchinji in 2005, retargeting has not been done despite the provision to retarget after every two years. Thus the implication is that once a household relocates to another cluster for whatever valid or invalid reasons they might have, chances of finding their way back onto the Scheme are essentially nonexistent. A case to revisit the graduation processes has subsequently been submitted to the National Social Cash Transfer Technical Working Group and stakeholders are yet to meet to discuss the same. It is hoped that policy alternatives to this effect will be put forward for a fair graduation and removal system.

vi. Challenges in defining a household and household heads

The study uncovered that much as the simple definition of a household refers to people living under one roof and eating in that house, the case in Chitipa is different due to higher levels of polygamy and stronger bonds in extended family. Consequently there is haphazard and more chaotic movements of individuals from one house to another thereby making it difficult for one to define the household in terms of numbers as others can move in or out of the same any time. Similarly, as men with more than one wife trail from one house to the other the concept of family head becomes somewhat knotty to operationalise; if a man leaves a house for six months does he continue being the

head of that household or the woman who is heading it takes over? This question becomes tricky particularly in a patrimonial society like Chitipa as the man is expected to continue being regarded as the family head thus the one to be getting the cash transfers on behalf of the household even if he is not physically living in that household. Thus such challenges put into question whether the cash transfers will indeed reach the intended beneficiaries and have the intended impact on the socioeconomic status of the intended household. To this end the district has resolved to regard the guardian who permanently resides in the targeted household as the recipient irrespective of sex and age.

vii. Exclusion of homeless orphans and other vulnerable children

Since the Scheme targets households as defined by the communities, destitute children, roaming prostitutes, homeless OVC who are not living in established households are left outside the targeting band. The implication is therefore that these children are left to continue living in such conditions with no hope of graduating and being steered into the mainstream society. If the scheme was extended to such children the first two objectives of reducing ultra poverty, hunger and starvation as well as to increase school enrolment and attendance would effectively be accomplished. However, with the current targeting limitations, that segment of the society is denied the opportunity to become productive members of the society someday. With growing animosity towards introduction of “foster homes” in the country advocacy position that came out often is that the Government should embark on a massive re-integration programme to

incorporate these wandering OVC back into the mainstream society so that they also stand to benefit what their colleagues in traditional households are getting. While the practicability of such an ambitious intervention remains debatable, the position of most respondents was that “it is better, in Malawi’s rural context, to take the child back to the mainstream community rather than putting them in institutions or letting them wander on the streets as they normally run away from their households mainly due to poverty”¹⁹.

viii. Challenge of political interference at community level

The study uncovered that much as there are agreed upon procedures governing targeting and delivery of cash transfers, the implementing partners particularly at cluster level have occasionally been subjected to undue political pressures from traditional leaders. Oftentimes traditional leaders exert pressures on Community Social Protection Committees to include beneficiaries on the list even if they are not eligible as per set down guidelines. Much as this might sound simple, it should be understood that the said committee is a composition of individuals who are subjects of the same traditional leaders. As such, if there are any fears or feelings of hatred being propagated, such occurrences, particularly if left unchecked, stand to make the lives of the committees unnecessarily too difficult considering the power and role of traditional leaders in village politics.

To this effect the National Social Cash Transfer Technical Working Group is considering a proxy means testing method that is more objective than the current one. With a proxy means testing method,

qualification will be strictly statistical with no subjective judgment employed. This will therefore work towards lessening malpractices in the targeting process. However, the challenge lies in processes after targeting has already been done as regards what needs to be put in place to ensure that beneficiaries indeed get and wholly enjoy their entitlements without any person getting back to them to get a share of the same. To this effect, the partnership is advocating for a grievance reporting system and case management framework. According to the 2011 annual work-plan for the SCT Programme, the Government will be looking at options of institutionalizing the two, in the quest to promote democratic governance in the execution of the Scheme.

3.3

Key Advocacy Challenges

As action research entails learning through doing, one of the implications was a continuous advocacy with the Government at district and national levels. Since, the Government at district level was part of the search conferences, i.e. data collection and analysis, it was very easy to get buy in from them. However, for changes to be effected, policy features at national level need to be changes and the district assembly lacks the mandate to do so. As such, policy advocacy was equally an important component of this project aimed at strengthening the Malawi Social cash Transfer Scheme. This experience has unravelled a number of challenges which must be considered when designing advocacy and communication strategies for future engagement by the civil society community. Key to these challenges are the following;

i. Relation of Civil Society Organisations with Government

It was found out that the Civil Society Organisations’ access to information from the Government is usually through informal sources because it is difficult to get information through the formal channels. The study also found that some quotas in the public service do not want to disclose any information regarding Government expenditure and the programs being implemented. The absence of access-to-information law aggravates the situation. Consequently, the civil society relies on informal channels which are oftentimes not very reliable. During the course of the project, it was therefore resolved to strengthen the working relationship with Government by amongst other ways strengthening the strategic partnership with the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation whose officials became part and parcel of the project. As such, these officials provided necessary information and clarifications on pertinent issues of the Social Cash Transfer Scheme during the research process. In turn we openly shared all information gathered in this project with the relevant Government bodies.

ii. Government consideration of CSO Proposals

The study uncovered that there is usually resistance on the part of the Government to consider advocacy proposals from the civil society because it does not want to be told anything to do with policy issues, accountability, transparency and how public resources are expended. The government tolerates the civil society organisations but does not really consider their recommendations or policy options. The

Government reasons that this is the case because the CSOs are after serving their own agendas. Reasonable partnerships with relevant government officials and departments have proved vital and possible towards policy agenda setting during the course of implementing this project, with reasonable compromises being made at times.

iii. Structure of the policy process

The procedure of policy making in Malawi poses another challenge to participation of CSOs in policy formulation. Both civil society organisations and government departments reveal that most policies that are implemented at district level are formulated at the national level with limited or no input from the districts. As such, CSO capability to change the policy landscape is only manifested during implementation of the same. As such the extent to which CSOs at district level can influence Government decisions is to a greater extent limited to resource allocation within the praxis of existing policies.

iv. The role of the political economy

This is the most critical challenge to policy advocacy within the praxis of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme. Considering the fact that the SCT Scheme has greatly been donor dependent, while being implemented within the framework of the Government’s decentralization system, two policy stakeholders tend to have an undue edge over others in decision making, i.e. the Government and the donors. The biggest challenge has therefore been that the agendas of the two have mainly been driven by rigid ideologies rather than needs on the ground. The civil society has had to, and continues to, sweat in order to put their policy positions across

the policy table. This has been manifested in some situations whereby professional civil servants have rejected policy recommendations because they were presented in the presence of donors, politicians and the media, only to come back later asking for a silent incorporation of the same, including incorporation of some civil society organisations into key decision making forums drafting the terrain of the Malawi Social Cash transfer Programme. The challenge is therefore to understand the incentives, relationships, distribution and contestation of power between different policy stakeholders and entrepreneurs and analyze the extent to which such factors impact on outcomes of the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Scheme.

3.4 Civil society options for change

Much as political factors have time and again dictated restraints on the extent to which CSOs participate in policy processes, there is evidence that part of the responsibility lies with CSOs themselves. Oftentimes, individual CSOs appear to work in isolation leading into poor coordination of efforts as well as germination of questions regarding their legitimacy and accountability. Another problem is that CSOs have demonstrated limited understanding of policy processes, a development that makes it difficult for them to influence policy outcomes. On the other hand, it is suffice to indicate that some CSOs have a wide repository of knowledge including real expertise in an issue area or an understanding of the concerns most important to their constituents.

However, the extent to which their policy proposals are evidence based remains a myth; a development that makes it difficult for policy makers to accept the said proposals. On another note, even for the few CSOs that engage in rigorous analysis on policy issues and come up with realistic policy alternatives, policy makers have oftentimes bemoaned their inability to make their findings accessible, digestible and in time for policy discussions. Within this context, a key challenge for CSOs is one of better communication. Overcoming the aforementioned challenges is not easy.

CSOs need to understand a policy context; access and generate rigorous evidence; package it for different audiences; engage with the policy process; and network and communicate with a wide range of partners. For this to be attained there is need for financial investments and a wide range of technical capacities. Otherwise, smaller and indigenous CSOs risk being crowded out by the Government and donor agencies, given their resource differences.

¹⁷ At the time of the study the SCT Scheme was funded by the Global Fund through the National AIDS Commission. From 2011 onwards the SCT Scheme will be funded by the German Government and funds will go directly to the implementing Ministries of the SCT Scheme, the Ministries of Gender, Children and Community Development as well as Ministry of Developmental Planning and Cooperation.

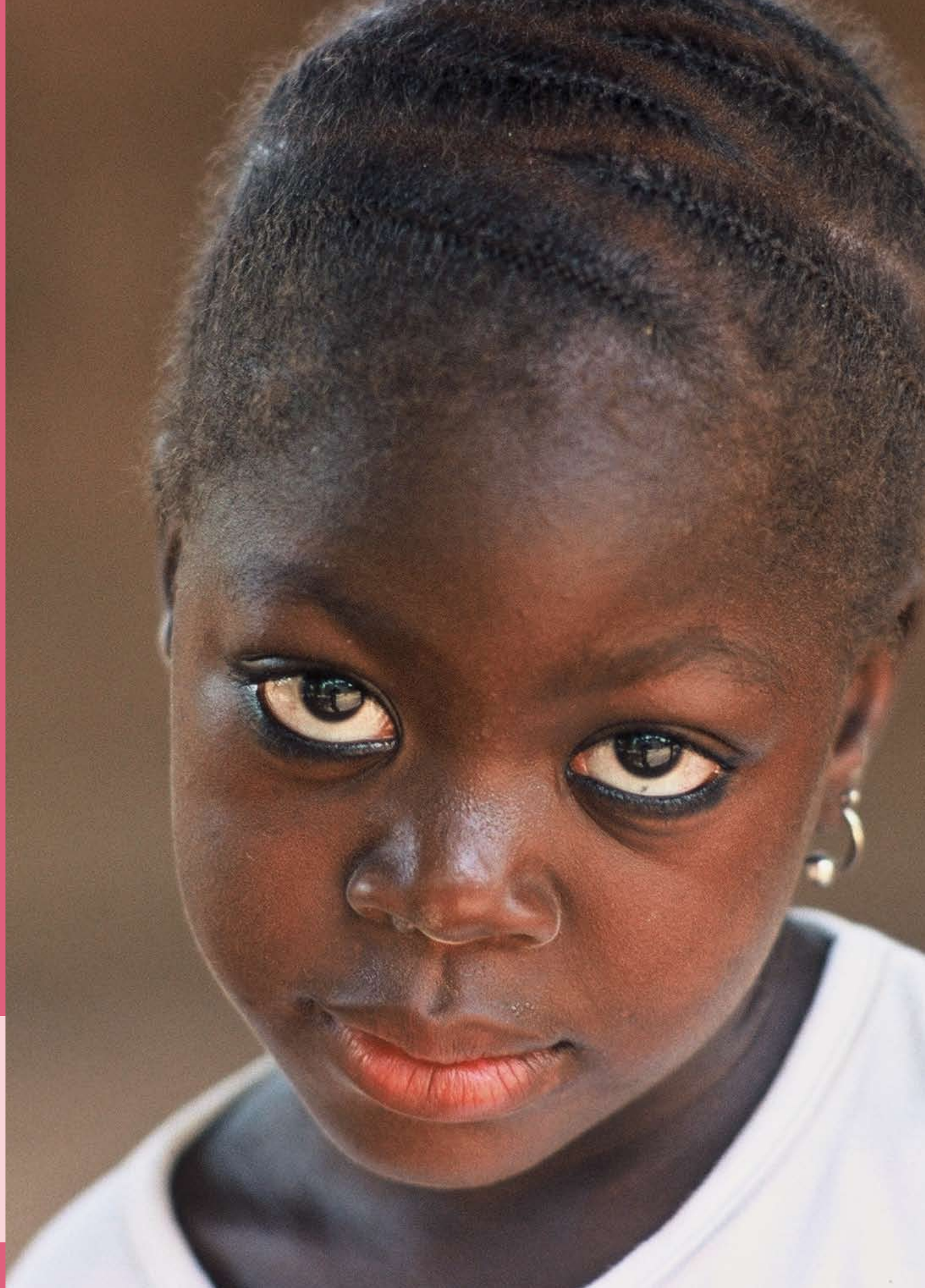
¹⁸ As a sitting member of the National Social Cash Transfer Technical Working Group, IPRSE took the privilege of submitting some positions to the group for consideration during the regular meetings held in the year 2010

¹⁹ Popular response phrased in the words of Mr. J Wafwa a SCT beneficiary in Kameme area; Chitipa district



Section D - **Advocacy**

Recommendations and Conclusion



Section D - Advocacy

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the outcome of the search conferences done in the district, IPRSE has presented a number of policy recommendations to both the National Social Protection Technical Committee as well as to the National Assembly, particularly Members of Parliament. To this end, the following are the recommendations that have been submitted:

- 1.** The Government should facilitate the adoption of the National Social Support Policy to provide a legitimate framework for putting its contribution towards the Social Cash Transfer Scheme through the national budget to ensure Government ownership, predictability and sustainability of the Scheme.
 - 2.** Government should start making strides towards funding the SCT Programme through the national budget, as part of the development budget while awaiting enactment of the National Social Protection Policy.
 - 3.** Government should seriously embark on a human resource capacity building initiative for all departments and directorates at the district level, considering the multi-faceted nature of the problems being addressed by the Scheme.
 - 4.** The District Assemblies, through District Executive Committees and the District Social Protection Committees should put in place deliberate measures that link beneficiaries of the SCT Scheme to other social protection interventions at the district level like school bursaries, psychosocial support, Agriculture Input Subsidies etc. so that they maximize the benefits of the cash.
 - 5.** The Government should support regular monitoring and evaluation of the Scheme and reports should be prepared and submitted according to plan i.e. monthly, quarterly and annually.
 - 6.** Households headed by school going children aged up to 25 years must be considered labour constrained during targeting.
 - 7.** Targeted percentage in each district must be commensurate with the ultra poor percentage population of that district; not the current uniform 10% across the country.
- Transferred amounts, along with lunch allowances for the trainers, must be revisited in line with the changing economic landscape. As indicated earlier on, some of these recommendations have already found their way into the SCT Scheme,
- and will be officially incorporated in June 2011 after a review of the Scheme, while some continue to be advocacy challenges for CSOs in Malawi to address. Having opened the policy window for meaningful civil society participation at the national level, the SCT programme must institutionalize similar windows at the district and lower levels. The most challenging task at the end of the project in Chitipa is to ensure that citizen participation manifests itself in the development of the National Social Protection Programme as well as in the implementation of the several social protection instruments currently being executed at the district level. The departure from elitist approaches to policy formulation into the joint formulation of the National Social Protection Policy demonstrates that it is possible to advance adherence to principles of good governance in Malawi's public policy processes. Of significant importance is the need to carry on with this commendable job in the process of developing the National Social Protection Programme that has just taken off, all the way through to the implementation of the same. On the other hand, a critical challenge remains to ensure that political pledges are matched with actions, by ensuring that the National Social Support Policy is adopted by Cabinet and subsequently enacted by Parliament.
- The good working relationship that the Chitipa project has witnessed blossoming should therefore be taken as a window of opportunity for the civil society community to advocate for evidence-based positions in our common aspiration to address the plight of the poor and the vulnerable in Malawi's larger society.



Appendix 1:

List of Respondents (Key informant Interviews for Baseline & linkages studies)

INSTITUTION	POSITION
Chitipa District Assembly	District Commissioner
Chitipa District Assembly	Director of Planning and Development
Chitipa District Assembly	Director of Finance
Chitipa District Assembly	District Social Welfare Officer
Roman Catholic Church	Priest
Malawi Economic Justice Network- Chitipa Chapter	District Coordinator
World Vision – Chitipa District Office	District Coordinator
Tovwirane Youth Organization	Director
NOVOC- Chitipa district	District coordinator
Catholic Development Commission (CADECOM)	District desk officer
National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE)	District Coordinator
Community Social Protection Committee- Misuku	Chairperson
Community Social Protection Committee- Nthalire	Chairperson
Community Social Protection Committee- Kameme	Secretary
12 SCT beneficiaries	Kameme
12 SCT beneficiaries	Nthalire
12 SCT beneficiaries	Mwaulambia

Appendix 2:

Interview Guide at District Level (for the linkages study)

INTERVIEW GUIDE AT DISTRICT LEVEL For DC, DPD, DSWO and DSPC

Name of Interviewee: _____ Position : _____

Date of Interview: _____

Briefly explain the purpose and objectives of this interview, within the framework of the project aimed at strengthening the SCT Scheme with support from STOP AIDS NOW! Netherlands.

Section A: Programme Background

1. When was the Social Cash Transfer Scheme introduced in the district?
2. How has the beneficiary population improved/depreciated overtime?
3. What are the observable benefits of the Scheme so far? (probe for as many as possible)
4. May you kindly outline objectives of the SCT Scheme?
5. What are other observable areas of impact beyond the stipulated objectives?

Section B: Programme Linkages

6. How do these objectives cross cut with other sectors at implementation level?
7. What are the sectors with which the SCT Scheme crosscuts?
(probe for as many as possible and list them down; provide extra paper if necessary)
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
8. How does the SCT potentially link with the sectors in 6 above (tally sector by sector)
9. Are there other potential sectors where beneficiaries of the SCT Scheme can be linked to?
(a) Yes (b) No
10. If Yes what are they? (probe for as many as possible)
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
11. How does the SCT relate to the sectors in 10 above? (probe sector by sector)

Section C: Prospects for Linkages (for each question, probe sector by sector)

12. What opportunities are currently available to link SCT beneficiaries with sectors above?
To what extent has the Assembly utilized these opportunities?
13. Are there any deliberate mechanisms to exploit such opportunities?
14. What can be done to maximize utility of the opportunities?

Section D: Challenges for Linkages

15. What can be singled out as key challenges undermining linking beneficiaries of the SCT to the aforementioned sectors?
16. What can you present as the root causes of such challenges?
17. How can these challenges be dealt with by dealing with the root causes?
18. Who is supposed to do what, to solve these bottlenecks?

Kindly ask for supporting documents/literature for cross referencing

Appendix 3:

Interview Guide At Community Level
(for the linkages study)

INTERVIEW GUIDE AT COMMUNITY LEVEL
For CSPCs and Extension Workers

Name of Interviewee: _____ Position : _____

Date of Interview: _____

Briefly explain the purpose and objectives of this interview, within the framework of the project aimed at strengthening the SCT Scheme with support from STOP AIDS NOW! Netherlands.

Section A: Programme Background

19. When was the Social Cash Transfer Scheme introduced in the community?
20. How has the beneficiary population improved/depreciated overtime?
21. What are the observable benefits of the Scheme so far? (probe for as many as possible)
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
22. May you kindly outline objectives of the SCT Scheme?
23. What are other observable areas of impact beyond the stipulated objectives?
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Section B: Programme Linkages

24. How do these objectives cross cut with other sectors at community level?

25. What are the sectors with which the SCT Scheme crosscuts? (probe for as many as possible and list them down; provide extra paper if necessary)
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
26. How does the SCT potentially link with the sectors in 6 above (tally sector by sector)
27. Are there other potential sectors where beneficiaries of the SCT Scheme can be linked to?
(b) Yes (b) No
28. If Yes what are they? (probe for as many as possible)
- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
29. How does the SCT relate to the sectors in 10 above? (probe sector by sector)

Section C: Prospects for Linkages (for each question, probe sector by sector)

30. What opportunities are currently available to link SCT beneficiaries with sectors above?
To what extent has the Assembly utilized these opportunities?
31. Are there any deliberate mechanisms to exploit such opportunities?
32. What can be done to maximize utility of the opportunities?

Section D: Challenges for Linkages

33. What can be singled out as key challenges undermining linking beneficiaries of the SCT to the aforementioned sectors?
34. What can you present as the root causes of such challenges?
35. How can these challenges be dealt with by dealing with the root causes?
36. Who is supposed to do what, to solve these bottlenecks?

Kindly ask for supporting documents/literature for cross referencing
Thank you very much for sparing your time to respond to this interview

Appendix 4:

**Interview Guide For Government Official At District Level
(Baseline)**

1. When did the Cash Transfer Scheme begin in the district?
2. Describe the social cash transfer process from targeting to delivery.
3. What's your role therein?
4. What are the goals, objectives and activities of the organization and what particular activities is the organization doing to influence policies?
5. How many policy areas is the SWO/ASSEMBLY working in?
6. What are the Scheme's sources of resources and how sustainable are they?
7. How large and qualified is the human resources of the secretariat especially for expertise in the implementation of the Scheme?
8. How does the Secretariat solicit financial resources and how sustainable are the sources?
9. Does the Secretariat conduct reviews of its activities and how often?
10. When is the last time you conducted such a review?
11. Are there other organizations, domestic and international, that the organization partners with in the implementation of the Scheme?
12. Is there sharing of information among government departments in the implementation of the SCT scheme?
13. Are the relational problems among the various stakeholders?
14. How effective is the Ministry in coordinating efforts in the implementation of the scheme?
15. How does the secretariat access information from the Ministry?
16. To what extent are the policy proposals made by the Secretariat taken on board by the Ministry?
17. Are their laws, procedures or any strictures to the operation of Non-State Actors in the SCT Scheme?
18. What are the challenges and prospects of the SCT scheme?
19. How many other policy areas is your department involved in?
20. Has there ever been re-identification of beneficiary households since inception?
21. Are there consultations before and during the targeting and implementation of the Scheme?
If yes, who are consulted? If not why not?
22. Who are the major players at the various stages of the process?
23. What role does each of the players in question 4 play?
24. How does the ASSEMBLY identify the stakeholders in the process?
25. Are there linkages between the SCT and other pro-poor programmes e.g PWPs, FISP, SFP, VS&L?
26. How does the assembly coordinate linkages with the other programmes?
27. To what extent are Non-State Actors (NSAs) involved in the process?

28. At what stage(s) are the NSAs involved?
29. What role do they play?
30. How do they get the information on new developments from the ASSEMBLY?
31. What challenges does the involvement of the NSAs present to ASSEMBLY in the process?
32. How would you rate the significance of the NSA involvement in the scheme?
 - a) Insignificant b) Significant c) Very significant
33. How would you rate the contribution of CSO to the scheme?
 - a) No contribution b) negligible c) substantial
34. How would you rate the relationship between the ASSEMBLY and the Civil Society in the implementation of the scheme?
35. What do you see as the major weaknesses of the civil society in the scheme?

Appendix 5:

Interview Guide For CSO/NGO At District Level (Baseline)

1. What are the goals, objectives and activities of the organization and what particular activities is the organization doing to influence policies?
2. How many policy areas is the organization working in?
3. What are the organization's sources of resources and how sustainable are they?
4. How large and qualified is the human resources of the organization especially for expertise in the policy areas of the CSO's operation?
5. How does the organization solicit financial resources and how sustainable are the sources?
6. Does the organization conduct reviews of its activities and how often?
7. Are there other organizations, domestic and international, that the organization partners with in its operations?
8. Do you anything about the Social Cash Transfer Scheme?
9. When did the Cash Transfer Scheme begin in the district?
10. Describe the social cash transfer process from targeting to delivery.
11. What's your role therein?
12. What are the Scheme's sources of resources and how sustainable are they?
13. How large and qualified is the human resources of the secretariat especially for expertise in the implementation of the Scheme?
14. How does the Secretariat solicit financial resources and how sustainable are the sources?

15. Are there other organizations, domestic and international, that the organization partners with in the implementation of the Scheme?
16. Is there sharing of information among stakeholders in the implementation of the SCT scheme?
17. Are the relational problems among the various stakeholders?
18. How effective is the Assembly in coordinating efforts in the implementation of the scheme?
19. How does your organisation access information from the Assembly?
20. To what extent are the policy proposals made by the NGO/CSO taken on board by the Assembly?
21. Are their laws, procedures or any strictures to the operation of Non-State Actors in the SCT Scheme?
22. What are the challenges and prospects of the SCT scheme?



Appendix 6:

Guideline for Search Conference

THE SEARCH CONFERENCE PROCESS

Stages 1-3	ACTIVITY	DETAILS
Step 1	Pre-Conference process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up Advisory Group of local representatives Agree on process design, and participants Send out invitations to participants in Chitipa
Step 2	Introductory plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions, review of objectives, outline process, introduce first stage Present problem tree analysis
Step 3	Group session 1	SCANNING THE ISSUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past and present situation Current problem analysis, problem tree analysis Outline probable futures
Step 4	Plenary presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports from the groups, discuss directions, introduce second stage
Step 5	Groups session 2	DESIRED FUTURES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long range visions Alternative/Preferred futures
Step 6	Presentation plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group reports, review progress, introduction to third Session

Stages 1-3	ACTIVITY	DETAILS
Step 7	Group Session3	OPTIONS FOR CHANGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constraints and opportunities Possible futures
Step 8	Presentation plenary	Reports, define strategic tasks/ actions, select key tasks, form task groups (what must change, how when and who should do what)
Step 9	Task group Sessions	Task group meetings
Step 10	Final plenary	Task group reports, discuss future contacts, create new Advisory Group
	Post Conference process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report distributed <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up contacts <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Group facilitates meetings of Task Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback on proposed actions <input type="checkbox"/> Further search conferences <input type="checkbox"/> Widen network <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing evaluation of outcomes

Appendix 7:
THE FGD PROCESS

Stages 1-3	ACTIVITY	DETAILS
Step 1	Preparatory Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set up group of local representativesAgree on process design, and participants
Step 2	Introductory plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introductions, review of objectives, outline process, introduce first stagePresent problem tree analysisDivide group into men, women, and youths
Step 3	Group session 1	SCANNING THE ISSUE <ul style="list-style-type: none">Past and present situationCurrent problem analysis, problem tree analysisOutline probable futures
Step 4	Plenary presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reports from the groups, discuss directions, introduce second stage
Step 5	Groups session 2	DESIRED FUTURES <ul style="list-style-type: none">Long range visionsAlternative/Preferred futures
Step 6	Presentation plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Group reports, review progress, introduction to third Session

Stages 1-3	ACTIVITY	DETAILS
Step 7	Group Session3	OPTIONS FOR CHANGE <ul style="list-style-type: none">Constraints and opportunitiesPossible futures
Step 8	Presentation plenary	What must change, how when and who should do what

Appendix 8:
Profile of Partners involved in this project

Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and Orphaned Children (NOVOC)

NOVOC supports OVC service providers (CBO, FBO, NGOs, and communities) to effectively respond to OVC issues through networking and advocacy, technical and organizational capacity building, child protection and resource mobilization. In this project NOVOC brought in its experience in advocacy work for OVC issues to lead in lobbying and advocacy for improved national level commitment and support for the implementation and scale up of the social protection policy and social cash transfer in the country.

Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO)

YONECO is a non governmental organization (NGO) that is committed to: Empowering the youth, women and children; Combating the spread of HIV infection; Mitigating the impact of AIDS; and, Promoting human rights and democracy for socio-economic development. In this project YONECO brought in its development experience at community level to take lead in the development of a project monitoring and evaluation tool to monitor the progress of the project and its impact among beneficiaries in the community. The tool has been developed in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and the District M&E officer in Chitipa district.

Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE)

IPRSE is a Malawian registered Think-tank working towards the promotion of progressive thinking in Malawi, through well researched and clearly argued policy analysis, discussion papers, reports and publications. The Institute was registered in May 2005 under the 1984 Malawi Registration Act no 19, registration number 7880. IPRSE endeavors to conduct rigorous and impartial research and evaluation of policies and programs as well as the publication and dissemination of the findings through well developed strong networks in government, donor community, academia, corporate, civil society and the community in general. In this project IPRSE brought in its research experience to lead in conducting a baseline survey and the action research for the project.

Centre for Youth and Children Affairs (CEYCA)

CEYCA aims at promoting the rights and active participation of children and young people through advocacy, facilitation, networking, research, education and documentation. In this project CEYCA was part of the coordination structure to support the implementation of this project. Furthermore CEYCA brought in its strength in advocacy and child rights.

STOP AIDS NOW! (Netherlands)

STOP AIDS NOW! raises funds for HIV and AIDS projects in developing countries; obtains (inter-)national political and public support for the efforts against HIV and AIDS; innovates or redefines strategies to improve the response to HIV and AIDS, and meet the needs of people affected. More information can be found on www.stopaidsnow.org.

STOP AIDS NOW! supported the project in Malawi in the light of innovating strategies for OVC support.



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STOP AIDS NOW! aims to expand and improve the Dutch contribution to the global response to HIV and AIDS. In STOP AIDS NOW! five organisations, the Aids Fonds, Hivos, ICCO, Cordaid and Oxfam Novib have joined forces.

STOP AIDS NOW! aims to:

- Raise funds in order to contribute to more HIV and AIDS projects in developing countries
- Obtain political and public support for the efforts against HIV and AIDS, both nationally and internationally
- Innovate or redefine existing strategies and establish new forms of cooperation in order to improve the response to HIV and AIDS, and meet the needs of people affected.

Please visit our website for a wide range of downloadable resources:

www.stopaidsnow.org/downloads



