Reviewing the Malawi National Social Support Programme

Mid-line Review: Key Observations from Programme Review Workshops
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Stakeholders discussed the performance of MNSSP programmes based on the following analytical lenses:

- Relevance
- Impact
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Institutional Capacity
- Sustainability
School Meals Programmes

Limited capacity to impact on educational performance

Need to differentiate between primary and secondary objectives

Resource and capacity constraints limit universal rollout

Donor driven programmes, with limited Government commitment

Failure to hand over programme raises questions about sustainability

Impact

Effectiveness

Fragmented implementation, making cooperation difficult

Challenge of HGPS with inconsistent supply, especially during the lean season

Absence of comprehensive M&E systems

Limited creation of linkages to other MNSSP programs

School Meals Programmes

Relevance

Efficiency

Institutional Capacity

Heavy reliance on community volunteers carries risks of sustainability and reliability

SHN Department within the MoEST lacks capacity to implement SMP

Sustainability
Social Cash Transfer Programme

**Impact**
- Limited impact and focus on nutritional outcomes
- SCT targeting criteria limit the potential for productive impacts of the transfer
- Lack of graduation

**Relevance**
- Unclear objectives with regards to graduation
- Low Government financial commitment

**Sustainability**

**Effectiveness**
- 10% threshold is inequitable, leads to distortions of resources, and excludes eligible households
- Cut-off undermines SCT’s effectiveness, creates confusion within community
- Lack of consistency in calculation of transfer levels

**Efficiency**
- Fragmented programme implementation
- Limited capacity of district financial units
- Lack of resources at the district level for implementers
- Heavy reliance on community volunteers
- High workloads and multiple responsibilities of district staff
Village Savings and Loans Programmes

- Limited returns from entrepreneurial activities
- Lack of guidance on business cases and lack of business skills
- Limited policy oversight from Government
- Some groups frequently change names or break up and reform the next year
- Sometimes field officers are required to assist in pay-outs, despite training provided

Impact

Relevance
- 

Effectiveness
- "Ad-on approach" makes it difficult to ensure that core VSL standards are met
- Lack of a coherent definition of expectations, core services, and standards
- Lack of harmonized trainings provided uniformly to all VSL groups based on required skills

Efficiency
- Lack of sector-wide M&E system
- Lack of regulations and implementation guidelines
- Lack of district presence of the MoIT

Institutional Capacity
- Weak link between implementers and committees at district level
- Unclear separation of responsibilities between Government and NGO
- Lack of district-level networking, review, and planning structures

Sustainability
Micro-finance Programmes

- Limited formal evidence of impact on poverty
- Returns on entrepreneurship are often limited
- Limited provision of insurance
- Unclear of the Government in MF
- Focus on agricultural activities means MFI clients mainly work during agricultural season
- High cost of lending makes MFI dependent on donor support
- Lack of harmonization and quality standards for trainings provided to MF clients
- Lack of financial literacy and business skills
- Interest rates of 50% make it difficult to generate a profit
- Lack of sector-wide M&E systems
- No ID to identify clients and cross-check with other implementers
- Inadequate regulatory framework
- Low staffing levels at the Reserve Bank of Malawi