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DEMOCRACY CONSOLIDATION PROGRAMME PHASE IV

PROJECT CODE: 00067139

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND CABINET

2016 MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
BSHDC	Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission
CBF	Community Based Facilitator
CARD	Church Action in Relief and Services
CDC	Centre for Development Communications
CEYCA	Centre for Youth and Children Affairs
CHRR	Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CRC	Community Rights Committee
DCP	Democracy Consolidation Programme
DCT	Development Communications Trust
DEC	District Executive Committee
GVH	Group Village Headman
GoM	Government of Malawi
HCC	Health Centre Committee
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IP	Implementing Partner
IPI	Institute for Policy Interaction
LDF	Local Development Fund
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MoV	Means of Verification
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation

MICE	Ministry of Information and Civic Education
PO	Programme Office
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RBM	Rights Based Management
RtD	Right to Development
RLC	Radio Listening Club
SCF	Stakeholder Consultative Forum
TA	Traditional Authority
ToT	Trainer of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
YONECO	Youth Net and Counselling

Executive Summary

Democracy Consolidation Programme (DCP IV) {2012-2016} is a Government of Malawi (GoM) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) programme on governance whose main aim is to build capacity of the citizenry through provision of knowledge and skills to demand compliance with governance and human rights principles from duty bearers at all levels of society. The Programme was designed in line with and to make a contribution to the realisation of the GoM's overarching development policies namely: Malawi's Vision 2020 and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II) (2011-2016). DCP IV seeks to contribute to the promotion of good governance and realisation of the right to development at grassroots level as prescribed in Section 30 of the Republican Constitution.

This report covers the period January to June, 2016. During the reporting period, the Programme continued to provide financial and technical support to 15 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and 1 public institution to implement various activities across the country. During the reporting period, three institutions namely, Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC), Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI) and Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) did not receive any financial support from the Programme because they had not yet satisfactorily accounted for the previous funds and resolved outstanding project management issues. The three projects were therefore suspended pending satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues. However, the Programme Office (PO) continued to offer the projects technical support in order to assist them to urgently resolve the outstanding issues.

During the reporting period, programme implementation picked up pace following UNDP's disbursement to the PO of the first tranche of funds for 2016 on 11th of April, 2016. Consequently, the PO was able to immediately provide grants to Implementing Partners (IPs) to carry out planned project activities.

Programme implementation in the two new districts of Balaka and Dowa prioritised a three-day Trainer of Trainers (ToT) session on fair trade, labour and consumer rights for 72 Community Based Facilitators (CBFs), 40 (10 female) for Dowa and 32 (14 female) for Balaka districts. The training provided the CBFs with knowledge and skills to fight exploitative labour and trade practices in their communities as well as cascade the knowledge and skills to Community Rights Committees (CRCs) and other community members in their respective districts. So far, 20 CRCs were trained on the topics in Balaka district. CRC trainings will commence in the next reporting period for Dowa district. Kasungu district which, unlike the other two new districts, failed to finalise CRC trainings on the Right to Development (RTD) by the end of 2015, held a CBF review meeting in order refresh the CBFs minds about the programme concept and strategise on how best to roll out the outstanding CRC trainings.

During this reporting period, the Programme continued to build the capacity of the project community structures, CBFs, CRCs and Radio Listening Clubs (RLCs) in the various target districts to demand good governance, realisation of the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights. This was done through CBF and RLC Review meetings and provision of guidance to the project structures through monitoring activities at various levels. The PO also organised a Stakeholder Consultative Forum (SCF) which was aimed at assessing progress in programme implementing as well as devising strategies for addressing common challenges and improving quality of results.

Further, the project structures continued to carry out community outreach on good governance, right to development, fair trade labour and consumer rights within their localities and held many dialogues with duty bearers in order to resolve their local challenges pertaining to the topics. The media based Implementing Partners (IPs) continued to produce radio programs as well as a newspaper supplement advocating for good governance, the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights while grassroots based IPs continued to provide free paralegal services at district level.

During the reporting period, project activities were generally affected by food insecurity which took community members away from project related activities in search for food. Most of the project structures also faced mobility challenges as most of the bicycles for use by CBFs and RLC members have worn out. The delayed funding of the projects in 2016 had a negative effect on some project activities such as monitoring, reporting and the airing of some radio programs. Further, financial constraints by Government Ministries continued to affect responsiveness of duty bearers to community demands for improved service delivery. It has also been observed that most Ward Councillors lack capacity to analyse the District Council budget as well as monitor how resources are being used. This compromises their oversight role in the implementation of development activities at district level. It has further been noted that different approaches to development by various institutions pose a challenge to human rights based projects, in the sense that, in the hard economic times, some organisations provide communities with quick fixes in form of basic commodities and allowances which are desirable but, not sustainable. This approach makes implementation a challenge for human rights based projects whose results require vigilance on the part of community members and are more visible in the long time.

However, despite the challenges outlined above, community members through the leadership of the project structures namely: CBFs, CRCs and RLCs remained vigilant in identifying their governance and right to development challenges and engaging relevant duty bearers for solutions. Furthermore, community members continued to fight against exploitative practices in labour and trade matters and engaged in various wealth creation initiatives. The communities sustained efforts to promote good governance and the right to development within their localities resulted in improved wellbeing especially for the most disadvantaged (the youth, children, women, people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDs).

The main lessons learnt during the reporting period were that putting women in key leadership positions is not an end in itself as there is need for deliberate empowerment initiatives to make their voices heard; exchange visits among the project structures assist weaker committees to learn from those that are doing well and that networking and collaboration with other stakeholders doing similar work ensures realisation of project goals in a cost effective manner.

1.0 Situational Background

DCP IV was designed in line with the overarching development policies namely: Malawi's Vision 2020 and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS II) {2011- 2016}. The Programme falls under the governance theme of the MGDS II. DCP IV was designed to contribute to the promotion of good governance and realisation of the right to development as prescribed in section 30 of the Constitution of Malawi.

At programmatic conceptualization of DCP IV was a response to issues highlighted in the Follow-up survey on civic education in Malawi (2011); the end of DCP III evaluation (2011); a situation analysis undertaken during the development process of the Programme; and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) {2012-2016}. The Follow-up survey on civic education in Malawi revealed the need for improved knowledge and skills levels on governance and human rights across the country, which would require sustained efforts to cover the identified gaps. At the same time, the end of the DCP III evaluation uncovered the fact that efforts at creating a critical mass had largely been successful at grassroots level effectively working towards improving community and individual well-being using governance and human rights principles. However, this positive development needed to be further deepened through sustained efforts to consolidate and cover the remaining 9 districts¹. On its part, the situation analysis, which was done during the Programme development process, revealed that Malawi's main problem is poverty whose root cause is the *"low enjoyment of the right to development, especially amongst children, women, people with disabilities, and the rural and urban poor"*. As alluded to earlier, DCP IV is also aligned to the UNDAF whose outcome is: *"National institutions foster democratic governance*

¹ Chitipa, Likoma, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Dowa, Balaka, Blantyre, Thyolo, and Chiradzulu.

and human rights to promote transparency, accountability, participation and access to justice for all especially women and children by 2016”.

DCP IV is aimed at building the capacity of communities at grassroots level to demand good governance and fulfilment of human rights, especially the right to development, from appropriate duty bearers. This is done through a three pronged approach:

- (i) Capacitation of grassroots communities through the transfer of knowledge and skills on governance and human rights, with special emphasis on the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights using animation, group work and other interactive methods;
- (ii) The creation of local project structures i.e. district officers, CBFs, CRCs and RLCs to lead the masses in making assessments of their community challenges and demand good governance and fulfilment of human rights, especially the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer protection from relevant duty bearers; and
- (iii) Provision of free paralegal services in order to facilitate access to justice for vulnerable groups. The goal of the Programme is *“Group villages progressively enjoying the right to development through demanding good governance and performance of correlative duties.”*

The Programme is largely implemented through CSOs and Public institutions that are selected through an open and competitive process. The IPs generally fall into two broad categories:

- (i) District based IPs which create local structures (District Officers, CBFs, CRCs and RLCs) to lead in the community assessments of their right to development challenges and action-taking processes for the realisation of programme outputs; and

- (ii) Media based projects which complement the district based projects through the provision of an alternative medium for right-holders to express their views and make demands on relevant duty bearers over various governance and right to development issues. The media projects also provide a readily available and efficient channel for disseminating relevant information to and sharing best practices with project beneficiaries, mostly the rural masses. DCP IV programming is guided by the Rights Based Approach (RBA) and Results Based Management (RBM). All programme activities give special consideration and priority to the status and needs of vulnerable groups.

2.0 Assessment of Programme results during the reporting period

As already stated above, during the reporting period, the Programme continued to provide financial and technical support to 15 CSOs and 1 public institution to implement various activities across the country². Financial support was not provided to BSHDC (Chikwawa), CARD (Mulanje) and IPI (Phalombe) because they had not yet satisfactorily accounted for their previous funding and resolved some outstanding project and financial management issues. The three projects were therefore suspended pending satisfactory resolution of outstanding issues. However, during the reporting period, the PO provided technical support to the projects in order to assist them to quickly resolve the outstanding issues. For instance, financial inspections and field monitoring visits were carried out for the three projects.

Programme implementation in two new districts of Balaka and Dowa prioritised a three-day ToT session on fair trade, labour and consumer rights for 72 CBFs, 40 (10 female) for Dowa and 32 (14 female) for Balaka districts. The training provided the CBFs with knowledge and skills to fight exploitative labour and trade practices in

² For list of supported institutions see Annex III

their communities as well as cascade the knowledge and skills to CRCs and other community members in their respective districts. So far, 20 CRCs were trained on the topics in Balaka district. CRC trainings for Dowa will be conducted in second half of the year.

Kasungu district which unlike the other two new districts of Balaka and Dowa, failed to finalise CRC trainings on the RtD by the end of 2015, carried out a CBF review meeting in order to refresh the CBFs on the programme concept and strategise on how best to roll out the outstanding CRC trainings. The Project devised an action plan to carry out the trainings in the next reporting period.

As a way of reaching out to community members with knowledge and skills on governance, right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights, the project structures continued to conduct community awareness raising meetings. The meetings generally focused on the need to enhance transparency and accountability in public service delivery and accord special attention to vulnerable groups in the implementation of social safety net programs; enlighten community members on fair trade, labour and consumer rights and how they can fight exploitative practices. The awareness raising meetings resulted in increased knowledge on the topics, acquisition of the necessary skills to promote good governance at local level and the ability to address community challenges through their own material contribution and engaging relevant duty bearers for solutions. In particular, during the reporting period, the project structures raised community awareness on rights of people with albinism in light of the recent barbaric killings and devised ways of protecting them. Similarly, project structures raised awareness on the issue of drug theft and put in place mechanisms to curtail it within their localities.

During the reporting period, the project structures in the target districts also convened follow-up and new interface meetings with duty bearers in a bid to address community problems pertaining to the right to development. The issues discussed included infrastructure development, accessibility and acceptability of basic social services and basic services, transparency and accountability in public service delivery, wealth creation initiatives and inclusion of vulnerable members of the

community in development initiatives. Most dialogues yielded positive results as seen in Annex I and II of the report.

The media based IPs continued to produce and broadcast radio programs namely: *Mau a Kumudzi*, *Khamalathu*, *Mbaliyanga*, *Titukule Boma Lathu* as well as the *Mfulu* Supplement in the *Boma Lathu* newspaper. Due to delayed funding, DCT was unable to produce and air *Khamalathu* and *Tilondoloze Khama Lathu* programs as planned. The media projects, who unlike their district based counterparts, cover the whole country, complemented the efforts of grassroots based projects through the provision of an alternative channel for disseminating important and objective messages, community demands as well as feedback to project beneficiaries on good governance, the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights.

During the reporting period, grassroots based IPs in 22 districts continued to provide free paralegal services at district level. 2,996 cases were registered out of which 1,987 were resolved, 749 were referred and 260 were pending. Vulnerable groups, in particular, women, children and the elderly continued to be the main beneficiaries of the free paralegal services.

IPs, CHINANSI, CEYCA, CHRR and CCJP continued to distribute cloth with messages on the right to development, fair trade, labour and consumer rights to project structures in their respective districts. Each district was assigned 6000 meters of cloth which was produced towards the end of 2015. The cloth was distributed to CBFs, CRC members, traditional leaders as well as members of the District Executive Committee (DEC). The IPs also used their project structures to disseminate IEC materials such as the *Boma lathu* and *Fuko* Newspapers.

During the mid-year, the PO and IPs continued to monitor project activities through reports, monitoring visits, CBF and RLC Review meetings and continuous follow ups. CBF Review meetings were carried out in 9 districts namely Rumphu, Zomba, Nsanje, Mangochi, Machinga, Mwanza, Neno, Dedza and Kasungu. A total of 352 CBFs (144 female) participated. On the other hand, DCT carried out RLC cluster Review meetings in all the three regions. The meetings were attended by 225 (123

female) participants comprising 4 RLC members and 1 GVH per club. Further, CRC exchange visits were held for 8 CRCs in TAs Nthondo and Malenga in Ntchisi district, 136 people (63 female) participated. 2 CRCs held exchange visits in Machinga district, 22 people (14 female) participated. Likewise, 2 CRCs held exchange visits in Ntcheu district, 25 people (11 female) participated.

The Review meetings provided an opportunity to inform the community structures of the forthcoming DCP IV end of phase evaluation and IP project audits, discuss reporting gaps and challenges as well as devise strategies for addressing common challenges. For instance, through the Review meetings, CBFs and RLC members discussed ways of addressing Albino abductions and killings that have been on the rise in the country. Among other strategies, it was agreed that the CBFs need to intensify awareness on the rights of Albinos in the community; facilitate a census on the number, age, location and sex of Albinos; report any form of abuse of Albinos including castigating remarks towards them; and tighten security for people with albinism in their communities. The inclusion of local leaders in the RLC Review meetings was value adding as it created space for interaction between RLC members and local leaders and enhanced their working relationship. In Mangochi and Machinga districts, during the review meeting, the CBFs were provided with copies of the Marriage Divorce and Family Relations Act and the Trafficking of Persons Act to use as reference materials.

During the reporting period, the PO organised a SCF which was held at Riverside Hotel and Conference Centre from 9th to 10th May, 2016. The meeting was attended by 37 (7 female) participants comprising District Paralegal Officers, Project Officers/Facilitators and Executive Directors from 12 institutions which are implementing projects with support from DCP. The meeting was aimed at assessing progress in programme implementing as well as devising strategies for addressing common challenges and improving quality of results. The SCF provided an opportunity to share knowledge and best practices among the IPs as well as provide clarification on the forthcoming DCP IV end of phase evaluation.

Progress under each output

Below is a summary of progress registered under each output. Since no survey was carried out during the first half of 2016, the report has gauged progress towards achievement of output targets using process indicators at CRC/GVH level which are consistent with the outputs.

Output 1: At least 70% of Group Villages in 28 districts effectively demanding progressive accessibility and acceptability of basic social services, basic services, and good governance, especially for women, youth, children and people with disabilities.

Indicators

- ✓ No. of CRCs trained and refresher trained on governance and RBA.
Planned: 200

Progress

4 CRCs comprising 56 members (38 female) had refresher training on governance, human rights and the right to development in Ntcheu. However, no CRC trainings on governance and RTD took place in Kasungu during the reporting period. However, the CBF Review meeting which was held during the reporting period devised an action plan to roll out outstanding trainings during the next reporting period.

Not achieved, gap: CRC training for 75 CRCs in Kasungu district. No refresher trainings are envisaged under the 2016 annual work plan.

- ✓ No. of CRCs dialoguing with duty bearers on governance and the right to development (RtD). **Baseline: 1,787; Annual target: 2,026**

CBFs, CRCs and RLCs in 22 districts continued to make assessments and hold community sensitization campaigns on good governance, the right to development

and how to demand realisation of the same from relevant duty bearers. During the reporting period, the CBFs, CRCs and RLCs carried out at least 2,430 sensitization meetings in the targeted districts reaching out to approximately 252,000 people (141,000 female). The meetings enhanced the capacity of community members to effectively demand good governance, and the progressive availability, accessibility, acceptability and affordability of basic social services and basic services from relevant duty bearers. As a result, at least 1,637 out of 2,408 CRCs (68%) and 59 out of 61 RLCs (96%) dialogued with various duty bearers, especially local government service providers, with the aim of finding lasting solutions to their community problems.

Partly achieved, gap: 389 CRCs. Data for 3 districts of Chikwawa, Phalombe, Mulanje not included, quarterly reports not provided to PO due to suspension of the projects. Data for Kasungu districts not included as most CRC trainings on governance and RtD are not yet done.

- ✓ No of cases registered and processed by the district paralegal office.

Baseline: 2,513; **Annual target:** 3,015; **Quarterly target:** 1,000

Progress

During the reporting period, grassroots based IPs in the 22 districts continued to provide free paralegal services at district level. 2,996 cases were registered out of which 1,987 were resolved, 749 were referred to appropriate case handling institutions while 260 were pending resolution at the close of the reporting period. Cases handled ranged from matrimonial issues, gender based violence, land and labour disputes. Women continued to constitute the majority of the complainants. Out of the 2,931 complainants, 1,915 were women, representing 65%.

Partly achieved, gap: 1,084. Data for 3 districts of Chikwawa, Phalombe, Mulanje not included, quarterly reports not provided to PO due to suspension of the projects.

- ✓ No of Radio programs on governance and RtD produced and broadcast.

Annual target: 312 radio programmes; 240 *Mfulu* supplements

Progress

During the reporting period DCT produced 25 *Khamalathu* programs; The programs were aired on Capital Radio Station and MBC Radio one. Likewise, 6 *Tilondoloze Khamalathu* program were produced and three each were aired on MBC Radio 1 and Capital Radio Stations. KKYO produced and aired 25 *Titukule Boma lathu* programs while Capital Radio produced and aired 46 *Mau a Kumudzi* Radio Programs. CDC produced 10 and aired 9 *Mbaliyanga* programs on MBC Radio 2. The Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MICE) produced 120,000 copies of the *Mfulu* supplement which were distributed to DCP project implementation partners for dissemination in their target districts.

Partially achieved, gap: 15 *Khamalathu*, 6 *Tilondoloze Khamalathu* and 4 *Mbaliyanga* programs.

Output 2: At least 70% of Group Villages in 28 districts demanding fair labour practices, and markets and consumer protection especially for women, youth and people with disabilities.

Indicators

- ✓ No of CBFs trained on fair trade, labour and consumer rights in Balaka and Dowa districts. **Planned:** 136

Progress

ToT sessions on fair trade, labour and consumer rights was done for 72 CBFs, 40 (10 female) for Dowa and 32 (14 female) for Balaka districts. The training provided the CBFs with knowledge and skills to fight against exploitative labour and trade practices within their communities.

Partially Achieved: No CBF training on fair trade labour and consumer rights was envisaged for Kasungu district under the 2016 Annual Work Plan.

- ✓ No of CRCs trained on fair trade, labour and consumer rights in Balaka and Dowa districts. **Planned:** 264 CRCs

20 CRCs in Balaka district were trained on fair trade, labour and consumer rights. CRC training for Dowa district will commence in the next reporting period.

Not achieved, gap: Training for 94 CRCs in Balaka and 150 CRCs in Dowa district. No CRC trainings on fair trade labour and consumer rights were envisaged for Kasungu district under the 2016 Annual Work Plan.

- ✓ No. of CRCs/RLCs reporting identification and resolution of fair trade, labour and consumer rights. **Baseline:** 2,166 **Annual Target:** 2,300,

Progress

The project structures continued to carry out sensitization meetings on the need for farmers and traders to sell their products in groups/ associations/cooperatives in order to bargain for better prices as well as fight exploitative trade practices. For instance, during the reporting period, 28 informal associations comprising 360 farmers (160 female) were formed in Zomba district with the help of the project structures. The associations are for Soya, Pigeon peas, and Rice. During the quarter, 1,204 CRCs out of 2,144 CRCs (56%) and 51 out of 61 RLCs (84%) reported identification and resolution of fair trade, labour and consumer rights.

CBFs, CRCs and RLCs continued to carry out sensitization campaigns on labour rights. Issues of child labour continued to dominate the interventions. During the reporting period, the project structures rescued a total of 452 children (273 girls) from child labour in 10 target districts, namely: Mzimba, Mchinji, Zomba, Nsanje, Mwanza, Neno, Dedza, Ntcheu, Machinga and Rumphu. The children who were under 14 years of age were employed in tobacco estates, and as domestic workers, herd boys, small fishermen (*bila* boys). The children were sent back to School. Apart from child labour, the project structures assisted some workers to be paid their dues and demand provision of protective clothing for their health and safety at work. During the reporting period, a total of 866 CRCs and 41 RLCs reported to have

carried out sensitization campaigns and taken action on the promotion of labour rights.

During the reporting period, the project structures continued to mobilize and motivate farmers to form collective marketing groups as a way of fighting exploitative practices by intermediary buyers. During the reporting period 909 CRCs and 111 RLCs reported identification and resolution of exploitative trade practices.

The Project structures led communities in fighting for the rights of consumers in their respective districts by among others, ensuring that traders were adhering to fair trade practices. They also stopped selling expired products such as drugs, milk, soya pieces and other consumables and confiscated uncertified scales. For instance, a total of 178 uncertified weighing scales were confiscated in Mwanza, Neno, Dedza, Ntcheu and Mangochi districts. During the quarter, 714 CRCs and 81 RLCs reported to have taken action on protection and promotion of consumer rights.

Partly achieved, gap: 1,096 CRCs.

Data for 3 districts of Chikwawa, Phalombe, Mulanje not included, quarterly reports not provided to PO due to suspension of the projects; Data not included for Balaka and Dowa districts, CRC trainings on fair trade labour and consumer rights not yet done.

- ✓ No. of CRCs/RLCs engaged in Income Generating Activities (IGAs)

Baseline: 783; **Annual Target:** 940

Progress

During the reporting period, the project structures continued to engage in various types of wealth creating activities in the belief that economically stable societies are in a better position to develop their communities. The initiatives include fish farming, bee keeping, winter cropping and Village Savings and Loans (VSLs) groups. During

the quarter, 876 CRCs and 88 RLCs facilitated implementation of wealth creating schemes within their localities.

Partly achieved, gap: 468 CRCs. Data for 3 districts of Chikwawa, Phalombe, Mulanje not included, quarterly reports not provided to PO due to suspension of the projects.

- ✓ No of CRCs/RLCs reporting taking action to protect rights of children and other vulnerable groups.

Baseline: 1,266; **Annual Target:** 1,519,

Progress

The project structures remained vigilant in the protection of the rights of children and other vulnerable groups. For instance, various communities through the leadership of the project structures, formulated bye-laws to protect children's right to education; withdrew children from early marriages and ensured that people who violated children's rights through defilement and other forms of abuse faced the wrath of the law. During the reporting period, 662 CRCs and 60 RLCs reported to have taken action to protect the rights of children and other vulnerable groups namely, the elderly, women, and people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDs.

Partly achieved, gap: 857 CRCs. Data for 3 districts of Chikwawa, Phalombe, Mulanje not included, quarterly reports not provided to PO due to suspension of the projects.

OUTPUT 3: Effective and efficient management, partnership formation and monitoring and evaluation of the Programme

- ✓ No of strategic partnerships facilitating the meeting of RtD demands by DCP IPs. **Baseline:** 38; **Annual Target:** 46

Progress:

All IPs continued to work closely with other CSOs and development committees such as VDCs and ADCs working at grassroots level. They also continued to be part of their respective DECs and other Civil Society Networks. Partnerships between ground and media based IPs were enhanced and proved to be value adding.

Fully achieved

- ✓ No of Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meetings and Stakeholder Consultative Forums (SCF)

Annual Target: PSC 2, SCF 2

Progress:

The PSC meeting was not held. However, a SCF was held in May, 2016. The meeting was attended by 37 (7 female) participants comprising District Paralegal Officers, Project Officers/Facilitators and Executive Directors from 12 institutions which are implementing projects with support from DCP. The SCF provided an opportunity to share knowledge and best practices among the IPs as well as provide clarification on IP Audits and DCP IV end of programme evaluation that was planned to take place within the reporting period.

Partly achieved

- ✓ Funding absorption rate **Annual Target:** 97%

Progress

The funding absorption rate for the reporting period stood at 54%

Partly achieved

- ✓ Established and functioning RBA and RBM monitoring and evaluation system

Progress

The PO and IPs continued to monitor project activities through reports, monitoring visits and continuous follow ups.

Partially achieved

3.0 Gender mainstreaming

The programme continued to promote gender equality through a number of ways. The identification and analysis of community challenges that is regularly done by the community project structures prioritized the needs of women and other vulnerable groups. Thus, the demands that are being made to different duty bearers are engendered. Furthermore, the community project structures namely: CBFs, CRCs and RLCs require involvement of at least 40 percent women as members of the committees. Other than the participation of women, the communities are also inclusive and take cognizant of the needs of the special interest groups such as children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

The number of women attending sensitization campaigns continues to grow from time to time. This is a good indication that women and other vulnerable groups are empowered with the necessary knowledge and skills to demand fulfilment of the right to development. It has however been noted that unlike women, the majority of men are reluctant to commit themselves to participate in development initiatives where they do not realize immediate economic gains. This has a negative effect on the operations of the groups as their contributions in whatever sense is minimal.

The community structures continued to mobilize women into groups in order to access loans from formal institutions such as OIBM or engage in Village Savings and Loans. The initiatives have provided the women with access to capital which has enabled them to engage in small scale businesses. There is no doubt that women empowerment initiatives need to be intensified to make the women more economically independent.

Women continued to benefit from and constitute a large part of the clientele accessing the free paralegal services offered at district level. This reached 65% during the reporting period.

4.0 Key Partnerships

Partnership and networking with various stakeholders proved to be an effective way of achieving project objectives. During the reporting period, All IPs continued to work closely with other CSOs and local development committees such as Village and Area Development Committees (VDC, ADC) working at grassroot level. For instance, the project structures in GVH Kasamba, TA Symon in Neno district worked in collaboration with the Village Natural Resource Management committees in their community to sensitize community members on issues of afforestation and natural resource management. Following these meetings, communities planted over 1500 trees along Lisungwi River to curb the challenges of erosion along the river. Similarly, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, CRCs in Mwanza, Neno and Dedza districts have been disseminating messages around food security in light of the drought that has been experienced in most parts of the country. The messages focused on the right quantities of food that each family needs to have in stock for it to be food secure for a year. Likewise, Livulezi RLC in Ntcheu district partnered with an international Non-Governmental Organization in a “bring girls back to school campaign” aimed at withdrawing girls from early marriages and enrolling them back into school. Similarly, the Project structures have worked hand in hand with Malawi Bureau of Standards, the District Council and Police in the fight against exploitative trade practices.

During the reporting period, the IPs continued to be part of their respective DEC and other Civil Society Networks. Ground based IPs continued to partner with media based IPs and realized more synergies. There is however need to continue to strengthen collaboration of stakeholders at various levels, more especially the CSOs in holding duty bearers accountable. The issues that are emanating from

the community level need to be consolidated and presented to stakeholders at district and at national level for action.

5.0 Financial Status and Utilisation

During the reporting period the Programme mobilized approximately US\$771,177.44 out of which US\$420,062.11 was spent representing 54% delivery rate. For expenditure per output, see Annex IV.

6.0 Lessons learnt

The main lessons learnt during the reporting period were;

- (i) Putting women in key leadership positions is not an end in itself as there is need for deliberate empowerment initiatives to make their voices heard;
- (ii) Exchange visits among the project structures assist weaker committees to learn from those that are doing well and that networking and collaboration with other stakeholders doing similar work ensures realisation of project goals in a cost effective manner.
- (iii) Vibrant and vigilant CRCs command the respect and cooperation of duty bearers in the majority of cases, and
- (iv) Weak and corrupt law enforcement institutions are fuelling lawlessness and impunity.
- (v) Extension of annual project audits to implementing partners (grantees) would assist PO deal with financial management/ accountability issues faced by implementing partners.
- (vi) Awareness of new laws such as Gender Equality act and pro-poor programmes by community level rights-based structures would facilitate access to justice by various segments of the local populations.

7.0 Challenges

- a. **Food insecurity:** project activities were generally affected by the national food insecurity which took community members away from project related activities in search for food.
- b. **Mobility challenges:** Most of the bicycles that were given to CBFs and RLC members to ease their mobility have worn out, this affected project implementation.
- c. **Delayed funding of projects:** The delayed funding of IPs in 2016 had a negative effect on some project activities such as monitoring, reporting and the airing of some radio programs such as *Khamalathu*, *Tilondoloze Khamalathu* and *Mbaliyanga* which forfeited their usual program slots and had to negotiate with the respective radio stations to get them back.
- d. **Non responsive duty bearers:** Financial constraints by Government ministries continued to affect responsiveness of duty bearers to community demands for improved service delivery.
- e. **Poor oversight by Ward Councillors:** Most Ward Councillors lack capacity to analyse the District Council budget as well as monitor how resources are being used. This compromises their oversight role in the implementation of development activities at district level.
- f. **Variations in project implementation approaches:** Different approaches to development by institutions working at community level pose a challenge to human rights based projects in that, during the hard economic times, some organisations offer quick fixes in form of basic commodities and allowances which are not sustainable. This approach makes implementation a challenge for RBA projects whose results require vigilance by community members and are more visible in the long term.

8.0 Conclusion

During the reporting period, project structures and their communities remained vigilant in addressing community challenges pertaining to their right to development. This resulted in improvement in their well-being as well as that of the vulnerable members of their community.

The Programme demonstrated its relevance in addressing the challenges outlined in the situation analysis. It also demonstrated that it was an enabling tool for the attainment of Vision 2020, theme 5 of MGDS II and Outcome 4.1 of the current UNDAF.

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