



THE MALAWI LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND (LNOB) STUDY
MAKING VOICES OF MARGINALISED GROUPS HEARD AND COUNT

CONDUCTED BY THE LNOB COALISON MALAWI

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY CENTRE (ICSC) FOR LNOB

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Introduction to Malawi

Malawi is located in the Southern Africa Region. **Malawi** is a landlocked country and it is sharing its borders with Mozambique, Zambia and Tanzania. The country's population is estimated at 20.3 million people according to the UN Population estimate data. Malawi joined the **Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Partnership** commonly known as the International Civil Society Centre (ICSC) for LNOB in 2020. At the local level a coalition was formed comprising international and local CSOs. By joining the Leave No One Behind Coalition both local and international organizations were strengthened. They shared capabilities; enhanced capacities to meaningfully engage in evidence-driven SDG monitoring, review and implementation. The local CSOs at the grassroots level were given an opportunity and orientated on citizen generated data collection, and meaningful monitoring of the SDGs implementation.

The second aspect is to track the citizen's knowledge on SDGs; and whether the SDGs services being implemented are benefiting the marginalised groups; if their voices are being heard and counted. It was also recognised that data which sufficiently captures the needs of marginalised groups is scarcely found in official monitoring statistics; the groups do not play a role in the planning of public services and policies development; and adequate solutions to improve the livelihoods of such communities, endangers the successful delivery of the SDGs overall. The skills gained will be enhanced especially at the local level after the validation meetings.

The Malawi coalition comprises Plan International Malawi (PIM); Centre for Social Accountability and Transparency (CSAT); Care International; National Economic Planning Commission (NEPC); Malawi Network of Older Persons Organisation (MANEPO); and Do for Children (DFC) was formed in 2020. The coalition convened its first awareness creation meeting on Leave No One Behind (LNOB) SDG commitment on 10 October 2020 and it was patronised 15 Civil Society Organisations. Follow up meetings were held with The National Economic Planning Commission (NEPC); Ministries of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare; Agriculture; Health; and UN Coordinators Office. The consultations facilitated the formation of the coalition and mapping out what needs to be done for Malawi in order not to LNOB. The coalition joined the Global Hub International Civil Society Centre virtual meeting to develop the work plan and put in place the required structures. The ICSC requested the Malawi Coalition to submit a concept for the seed money to conduct the joined citizen generated data study in 2021. The first seed money was received in March 2022 for the study whose results are outlined below.

Purpose of the leave no one behind study

The purpose of the study was to bring out recommendations to enhance the inclusion of marginalised groups into the Affordable Input Programme (AIP) and Social Cash Transfer Program (SCTP).

Further to solicit citizen feedback on their perceived performance of the Social Protection Programs in Malawi particularly the SCTP and the AIP in line with SDG 10.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the leave no one behind citizen generated data collection are to:

- Assess citizens knowledge on the SDGs, MW2063 and the Malawi 2063 first 10-year implementation Plan (MIP1).
- Enhance capacities of national CSOs and local civil society to meaningfully engage in an evidence-driven SDG monitoring, review and implementation.
- Strengthen existing participatory spaces and feedback mechanisms that give voice and agency to marginalised communities
- Review the existing data in order to measure the progress in the implementation of the SDGs.
- Find out if the Malawi population is aware of the SDGs and what services have, they accessed in line with SDGs.
- Close the knowledge gaps on the drivers of marginalisation via community-driven data generation.
- Foster an enabling political environment towards a more evidence-driven, inclusive and participatory SDG implementation, based on the increased recognition and use of community-driven data
- Contribute to evidence-based policy formulation, programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Influence the revision and/or generation of meaningful policies and services to address the situation of marginalised group

Rationale of the study

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created in the spirit of “Leaving No One Behind”, meaning that all the SDG goals need to be achieved for everyone. Unfortunately, however, data that sufficiently captures the needs of marginalized groups is scarcely available in official monitoring statistics and hence doesn’t play a role in the planning of public services, policies development, and holding duty bearers to account for their commitments. In the absence of the data, no proper solutions can be offered to improve the livelihoods of the marginalised people. The situation has compelled Civil Societies to get together and start initiatives to support the government agenda to realize the SDGs.

The Leave No One Behind Partnership, a program hosted by the International Civil Society Centre (ICSC), comprises of 12 global members and 90+ national and local partners. The Partnership's main goal is to deliver a scalable solution for filling data gaps on marginalised groups in development monitoring through the generation and use of community driven data - capturing the needs of the most marginalized groups; giving voice and agency to marginalized groups who are at risk of being overlooked in the implementation of the SDGs programming and services.

In 2018, the partnership set up national coalitions in 5 pilot countries (Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nepal and Vietnam), bringing together national NGOs and civic platforms, and community-based organizations. Malawi formed a national coalition aligning with the ICSC in 2020.

The Malawi Coalition chose to pursue SDG number 10: Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Inequality within and among countries is a persistent cause for concern and Malawi is no exception.

The LNOB agenda therefore compels governments and CSOs to focus on the elimination of discrimination and inequalities which are multiple, intersectoral and undermine the agency of people as holders of rights. Many of the barriers' people face in accessing services, resources and equal opportunities are not simply accidents of fate or a lack of availability of resources, but rather the result of structural issues such as discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people further and further behind. It was therefore against this background that the LNOB Malawi coalition embarked on a study to ascertain levels of inclusion of marginalized groups in the two national flagship social protection programs namely; Social Cash Transfer and the Affordable Input Programme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of marginalized populations

Marginalized populations are groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion in mainstream social, political, economic, education, and cultural life because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions (World Bank, 2013). Discrimination may come due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, being old, children, teenagers, adolescents; persons with below average

intelligence and cognitive impairment; with disability hearing or sight impairment; Persons with a serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI); language, and/or immigrants like refugees, and migrants; women and girls are worst. Majority of them have been underserved by the SDGs implementation due to several social and economic causes. There is a multidimensional aspect, with social, economic and political barriers all contributing to the marginalization of an individual or group of individuals. For instance, people can be marginalized due to multiple factors; sexual orientation, gender, geography, ethnicity, religion, displacement, conflict or disability.

Marginalized areas are where distribution of scarce resources does not reach resulting in social exclusion from the dominant socio-economic, cultural and political structure. The mostly marginalized are women and girls, rural dwellers, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, and the LGBTI community. The groups are systematically excluded by barriers that are not purely economic, but political, social and cultural. Marginalized youths' majority of whom are students are "underserved, disregarded, ostracized, harassed, persecuted, or sidelined in the community". Women and girls do not have the same chances to access factors of production, contribute to policy decisions and execution, control and benefit from the economy. They don't have the chance to get a good job, attend a technical school to equip them with the skills to enter a certain sector.

Marginalised groups want to benefits from development work; better education, sanitation, job opportunities, hospital facilities and inputs among others. Social exclusion and marginalisation is the disadvantage and relegation of disciplines like education, sociology, psychology, politics and economics. There is need to empower marginalized groups so that no one is left behind especially in the implementation of the SDGs.

There is a need to:

1. Pay attention to the language; avoid generalizations; and stereotypes.
2. Make corrections to the wrongs
3. Be intolerant of intolerance.
4. Seek out marginalized voices and perspectives and make their voices heard and count.
5. Educate the community.

Marginalisation in Malawi

Malawi faces several social problems namely poverty, where 50.7% of the population lives under the poverty line of less than \$2 per day, and a high HIV infection rate. Oxfam's analysis identifies two foremost structural drivers of inequality in Malawi: the political capture of government and public institutions by the country's minority elite; and the pervasive social norms that underpin extreme gender disparities in all aspects of life

According to the 2021 Poverty Report, Malawi has registered a marginal improvement, with the share of the population living below the national poverty line declining to 50.7 percent in 2021 from 51.5% in 2016. This improvement is attributed to the strengthening

of the implementation of various social protection programmes. For the country to meet the target of halving the poverty levels by 2030 however there is need to intensify poverty reduction programmes. For example, 61.7% of Malawi's population is multidimensionally poor. The intensity of poverty is 54.6%, meaning that nationally poor people experience, on average, more than half of the weighted deprivations. The MPI, which is the product of the incidence and intensity of poverty, is 0.337.

Malawi ranks 160 out of the existing 182 sovereign nations on the Human Development Index and is currently one of the world's poorest nations. The share of Malawians living below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day has increased from 71.4 percent in 2015 to 73.5 percent in 2019, and approximately 90% live on less than \$2 a day according to the Rural Poverty Portal World Bank leaving many with food shortages, health concerns, and minimal access to education.

A closer analysis shows that levels of poverty are higher among people aged between 18 years and above at 42%, followed by those between 5 to and 14 years at 35%. Poverty levels in female headed households are higher than their male counterparts, at 56.8 percent and 48.5 percent respectively. Incidence of poverty among female-headed households has however declined from 58.3 percent in 2016 to 56.8 percent in 2021.

The level of poverty is higher among the rural residents and is estimated at 56.6 percent while the urban residents the estimate is at 19.2 percent. Poverty among the urban residents increased from 17.7 percent in 2016 to 19.2 percent in 2021. 20.5 percent of the population are currently classified as ultra-poor an improvement from 24.5 in 2016. Poverty in Malawi is driven by low productivity in the agriculture sector, limited opportunities in non-farm activities, volatile economic growth, rapid population growth, and limited coverage of safety net programs and targeting challenges.

Malawi faces continued challenges of deforestation, constrained water resources, declining fisheries, limited institutional capacity to manage natural resources, and farming practices that lead to soil erosion; reduced fertility and runoff floods, among others.

Nearly 70% of women in Malawi live below the international poverty line. One in four Malawian women aged 15-49 years have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former partner.

The relatively low level of income inequality in Malawi is attributed to Limited access to education. Demand for public university places far outstrips supply, so the large majority of qualified applicants miss out. Malawi also has one of the world's lowest levels of public spending on primary education per primary school child.

The population projection for Malawi by 2022 is 20.02 million according to the econometric models. The population of Malawi represents 0.22 percent of the world's total population which arguably means that one person in every 453 people on the planet is a resident of Malawi.

Malawi is experiencing rapid population growth, coupled with limited access to electricity and energy

Malawi has intensified its social protection programmes, currently covering 293,522 household beneficiaries with 1,284,633 individuals (about 7 percent of the country's population) from 290,036 households in 2020 across all 28 districts. Seventy percent (70 percent) of the beneficiaries were women. In addition to the regular SCTP, Government also reached out to 144,104 in the cities with the COVID-19 Urban Cash Intervention.

"There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women."
– Kofi Annan

Desk review of the existing reports on AIP/SCTP

In addition, the study also conducted a desk review of the existing policies, reports of SDGs, and the programmes in general. Specifically, the study analysed the following reports and policies as they relate to the implementation of the AIP/SCTP in Malawi

Study methodology

The study involved the mapping of the existing participatory spaces for marginalised groups and stakeholders; worked with local communities and government service providers to identify gaps in line with the implementation and knowledge of SDGs and social protection projects namely; the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) and Affordable Input Programmes (AIP). The focus was on the review of the above-named on-going social protection programmes to ascertain their inclusiveness and impact on the lives of the marginalized groups. The data collection study covered three geographical districts one from each of the political regions in Malawi.

The voluntary national review report on SDGs implementation has reported that youths and other marginalized groups across the country are not aware of the SDGs. Thus, in order to address the gap, the LNOB citizen generated data collection used simple tools at the community level.

Community score card

Citizens were consulted through the use of community Score Card methodology. The Community Score Card is an approach that facilitates conversation between communities and service providers through focus group discussions where they interrogate bottlenecks to service delivery and use, with an intention to identify solutions that are jointly implemented. Focus group discussions were held to solicit feedback on the inclusion of the social cash transfer and the affordable input programme of marginalised groups. Participants to the study included both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the two social protection programmes. Due to resource constraints the study has systemically identified three districts one from each of the three geographical regions targeting 2 Traditional Authorities per district. The districts in question are: Mzimba in the Northern Region, Kasungu in the Central Region and Mangochi in the Southern Region of Malawi.

The following are therefore the target groups for the focus group discussions:

- a) Youth (girls and boys)
- b) Women
- c) Men
- d) AIP beneficiaries
- e) SCTP beneficiaries
- f) Service Providers (AIP/SCTP) at the local authority level
- g) Local leaders (chiefs, faith-based leaders, community development leaders)
- h) Elderly
- i) Persons with disability (PWD).

Study Limitations

The study was not carried out at the scale it was intended. The number of districts targeted was reduced from 6 to 3 due to increased operational costs. Initially the targeted districts included the following: Rumphi, Mzimba, Kasungu, Mwanza, Mangochi, and Nkhotakota; of these Rumphi, Nkhotakota, and Mwanza were dropped. During the period of the study, because the price of fuel had increased by 100%, and the daily subsistence allowances covering the team collecting data had gone up by 48%. Consequently, the scope of the activities of the study as per the budget which remained the same was reduced.

The two programs targeted by the study were viewed as politically sensitive by some people and some respondents were not comfortable to share honest feedback on the programmes, performance. They feared reprisals.

The study applied a qualitative approach called Community Score Card (CSC), which facilitates conversations between duty bearers and rights holders to unearth and interrogate issues affecting service delivery with an intention of co-creating solutions that are viable for the context. In this case, the CSC was adopted for the purpose. But due to resource limitations, the interface between providers and right holders was omitted. This limited co-creation of ideas. A make-do arrangement was improvised where the facilitators debriefed the duty bearers and brought forward ideas that fused with the community suggestions.

Furthermore, competing priorities compelled some service providers to leave before the end of the interface discussions. They prioritized attending their businesses to being at a communal meeting especially in Mangochi district.

Study Report

The report presents the findings of a study on the inclusion of the most marginalized individuals. The aim of the study was to find out if the marginalised groups know what SDGs are; and to understand whether the two social protection programs namely: Affordable Input Program (AIP) and Social Cash Transfer Programs (SCTP) are in line

with the MW2063, MIP I and SDGs and are beneficial to the marginalised groups. The study was conducted in three districts of Kasungu, Mzimba, and Mangochi and it solicited feedback from the frontline duty bearers; community members and beneficiaries of the two social protection programs on their experiences.

The study was commissioned by the Leave No One Behind Malawi Coalition, whose mandate is to monitor the implementation of the SDGs, especially SDG number 10. SDG number 10 was chosen noting that over 80% of the population in Malawi live below the poverty line. The development of Malawi therefore depends on providing equal opportunities to all including the most marginalized. The SCTP and AIP were chosen because they are designed to fight poverty in Malawi by helping the most marginalized to be moved out of poverty and gain respect.

2.0. STUDY FINDINGS AND DETAILED REPORT

The findings are presented according to the social protection program under assessment starting with the AIP and ending with the SCT. Based on the analysis 10 themes emerged as follows:

- a) Marginalized groups knowledge about SDGs and MW 2063
- b) Beneficiary Selection
- c) Inclusion
- d) Coordination
- e) Time Management
- f) transparency and accountability
- g) Time at service point
- h) Complaints, redress, and feedback mechanism
- i) Utilization of inputs/cash by beneficiaries
- j) Maintaining beneficiary dignity and community support

2.1. INDICATOR ANALYSIS AFFORDABLE INPUT PROGRAMME (AIP) AND SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

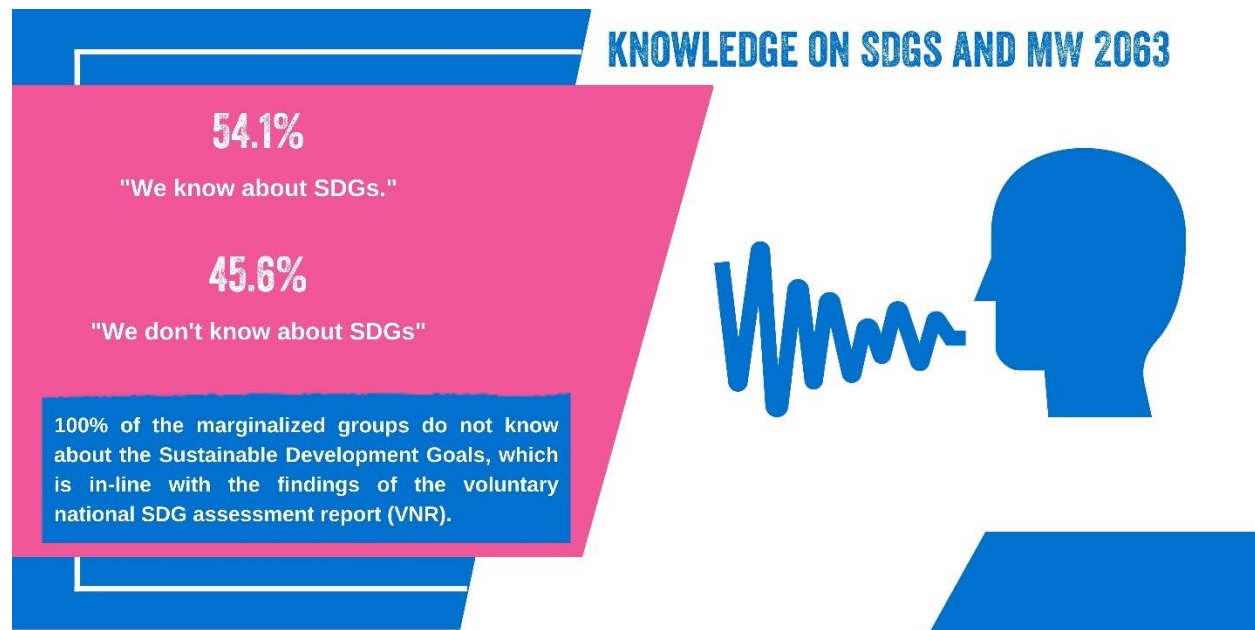
The beneficiary respondents' analysis used the citizen generated data community score cards analysis for both programmes; focus group discussion guide; and key informant interviews. The score card uses perception-based rating. The ratings were based on the identified themes outlined above for both the AIP and Social Cash Transfer Programmes. The scores which the respondents provided for both programmes are as presented in the table below:

INDICATOR				SCORES FROM DIFFERENT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS				
				Key Meaning of the scores: 80-100 = extremely satisfied 60-79 = Satisfied 50-59 = slightly satisfied 40-49= Neutral 30-39 = slightly dissatisfied 20-29 = Dissatisfied 0-19 = extremely dissatisfied				
	Mzimba Consolidated Score (AIP)	Kasungu Consolidated Score (AIP)	Mangochi Consolidated Score (AIP)	Average Score for AIP	Mzimba Service Providers (SCTP)	Kasungu Service Providers (SCTP)	Mangochi Service Providers (SCTP)	Average Score for SCTP
Marginalized groups knowledge about SDGs and MW 2063	25%	20%	15%	20%	25%	20%	15%	20%
Beneficiary Selection	30%	54%	25 %	36.3%	75%	75%	70%	73.3%
Inclusion	75%	80%	5%	53.3%	80%	70%	60%	70%
Coordination	50%	80%	10%	46.7%	80%	80%	75%	78.3%
Time management	40%	75%	5%	40%	80%	70%	65%	71.7%
Transparency and Accountability	60%	60%	10%	43.3%	95%	90%	85%	90%
Point of service waiting time	100%	79%	50%	76.3%	85%	75%	60%	73.3%
Complaints, redress, and feedback mechanisms	50%	45%	0%	31.7%	75%	85%	75%	78.3%
Utilization of inputs/cash by beneficiaries	80%	78%	50%	69.3%	75%	60%	60%	65%
Maintaining beneficiary dignity and community support	80%	60%	15%	51.7%	65%	80%	50%	65%

2.1.1 Marginalized groups knowledge on SDGs and MW 2063

Generally, knowledge on SDGs among marginalized groups is very low regardless of type and benefiting or non-benefiting from the social protection programmes. For example, from the findings in Kasungu it was observed that 37 participants out of 68 representing 54.4% which comprised the categories of women, youth and service providers they said

“we know about SDGs” while the remaining 31 indicated “we do not know about the SDGs” these were men, local leaders and Beneficiaries of both programs SCT and AIP. Those who indicated to have knowledge of SDGs could however not articulate them. Instead, they mentioned general developments programs such as schools, food production and hospitals. In conclusion, 100% of the marginalized groups do not know about the Sustainable Development Goals which is line with the findings of the voluntary national SDG assessment report (VNR).



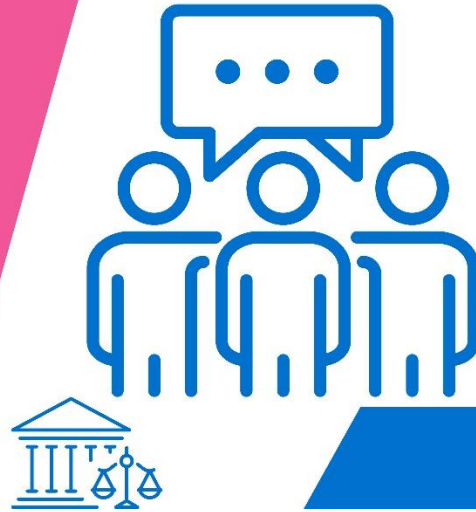
2.1. 2 Beneficiary Selection

Generally, the respondents were not satisfied with the beneficiary selection criterion as reflected in the following consolidated average score for all the districts; Mzimba (30%), Mangochi (37.5%) and Kasungu (25%). The major reasons for dissatisfaction include the following:

- a) Lack of community engagement in the recruitment of beneficiaries. The respondents said, “government used a computer-based beneficiary selection process as such we were not involved in the selection process hence many of us were left out”.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RECRUITMENT OF BENEFICIARIES

"Government used a computer-based beneficiary selection process as such we were not involved in the selection process hence many of us were left out."



- b) Ineligible households were included on the beneficiary list at the expense of the poor families.
- c) The selection of beneficiaries was done centrally based on the vulnerability assessment reports done some five years ago. The result was the reduction in the number of the targeted and selected beneficiaries as compared to the total number of vulnerable households in the community. *"There is no room to include new members. The same people keep receiving the AIP and social cash transfers regardless of their current status".*

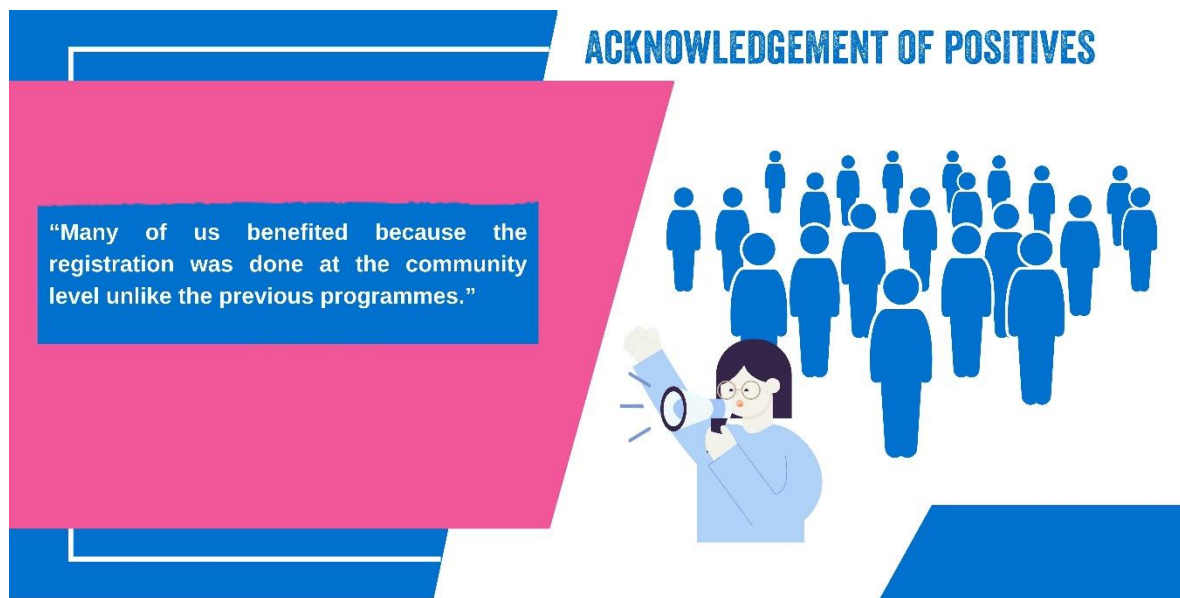
SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

"There is no room to include new members. The same people keep receiving the AIP and social cash transfers regardless of their current status."



- d) Where an opportunity arises for local leaders participate in registration of the beneficiaries during the initial stages, the respondents reported that local leaders prioritize registration of relatives at the expense of the poor and vulnerable households.

It is however imperative to mention that despite the many challenges facing the selection of AIP beneficiaries, some of the respondents acknowledged some positive and good practices. In Mzimba district, for instance, youths, the elderly and service providers said *“many of us benefited because the registration was done at the community level unlike the previous programmes”*.



2.1.3 Inclusion

Overall, the respondents from all the three target districts of Kasungu, Mzimba and Mangochi were generally not satisfied with the levels of inclusion of the AIP. This is reflected in the average consolidated scores as follows Mzimba (40%), Kasungu (37.5%) and Mangochi (43.8%). The respondents attributed the low scores to the following factors:

- a) The beneficiary registration criteria for the AIP excluded some key vulnerable groups such as Persons with Disability (PWD), the elderly, widows, child headed (CHHs) and households hosting the chronically ill.
“We are not included in the selection criteria”
- b) The AIP program did not put in place deliberate criterion to target the vulnerable and marginalized groups.

“We walk long distances to access farm inputs under the AIP programme and it is very difficult for the elderly and persons with disabilities to access the farm inputs”.

“AIP program does not provide platforms where our voices could be heard in decision-making processes at all levels”.

Notwithstanding the challenges some of the sampled respondents scored inclusion highly arguing the program did not entirely exclude marginalized and vulnerable groups. In Mzimba district for instance, *women and AIP beneficiaries* scored inclusion at 60% and 75 % respectively. Women, elderly and persons with disabilities AIP beneficiaries said *“we accessed farm inputs in our area”*.

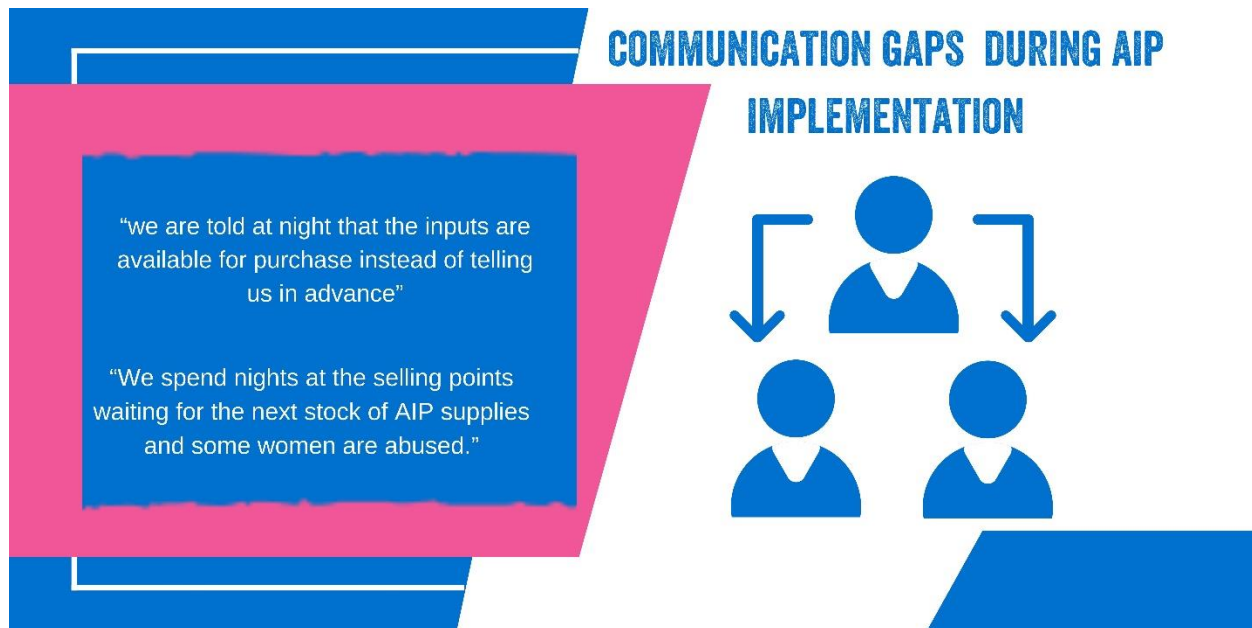


2.1.4 Coordination

Generally, the study respondents were not satisfied with coordination of different stakeholders during the implementation of the AIP program as reflected in the scores across the focus groups in all the three districts. While the respondents in Kasungu and Mangochi districts scored coordination of stakeholders in the AIP program poorly at 40% and 30% respectively, their counterparts in Mzimba district however scored coordination of the AIP program fairly at 53.8%. Key on the reasons for the low consolidated scores include the following:

- a) There was communication gap among all stakeholders involved in the AIP program which negatively affects the information reaching the beneficiaries. Information of the AIP program reached the communities late and the beneficiaries lamented, *“we are told at night that the inputs are available for purchase instead of telling us in advance.”*

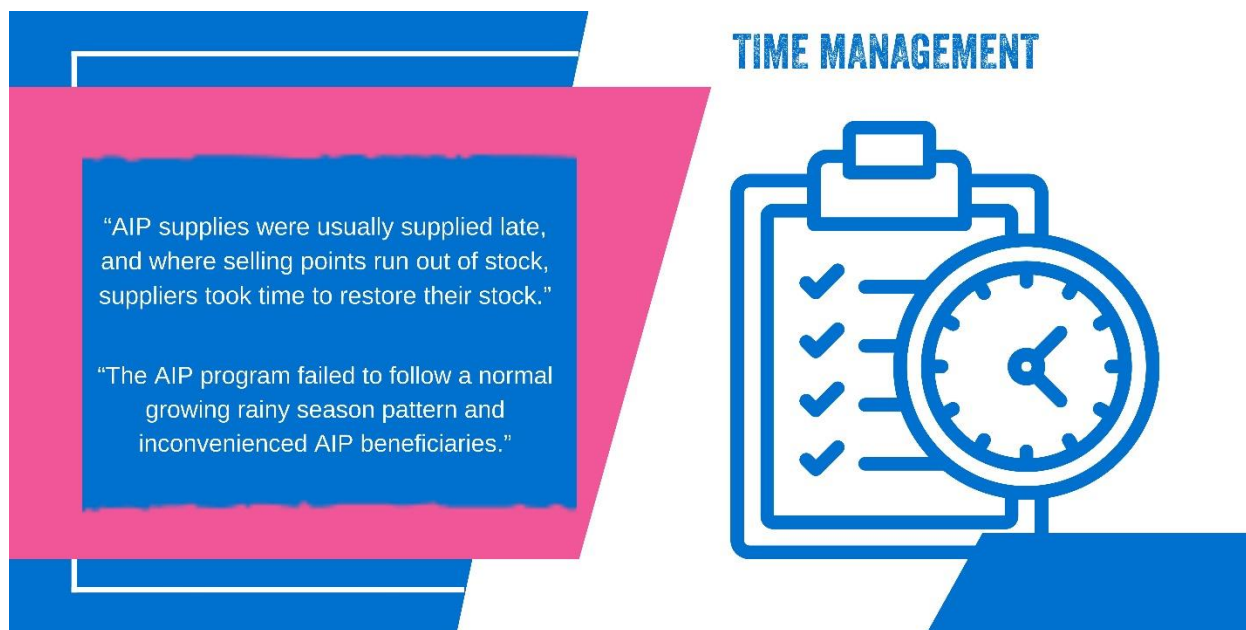
- b) AIP supplies were not communicating to AIP beneficiaries on the date for the next stock availability. Beneficiaries *"We spend nights at the selling points waiting for the next stock of AIP supplies and some women are abused"*.
- c) Stakeholders' consultations were only done in the initial preparatory stages of the AIP program but afterwards the stakeholders were working in isolation.



2.1.5 Time Management

Respondents from all the sites sampled in the three target districts were not satisfied on time management from delivery to accessibility at selling points. This is reflected by an average consolidated score of 20%. The AIP guidelines are explicit on AIP time management. They state that AIP beneficiaries shall start accessing AIP inputs before the commencement of the rainy season. But according to the respondents; *"AIP supplies were usually supplied late, and where selling points run out of stock, suppliers took time to restore their stock"*.

In addition, the respondents said *"The AIP program failed to follow a normal growing rainy season pattern and inconvenienced AIP beneficiaries"*. In view of the above factors; the following consolidated scores were registered Mzimba (20%), Mangochi (10%) and Kasungu (30%).



2.1.6 Transparency and Accountability

The AIP guidelines demand high level of transparency and accountability of program delivery system from recruitment of beneficiaries to disposition of AIP supplies in various market points. At every stage, government officials and AIP private traders are expected to demonstrate transparency and accountability to build public trust and confidence in the program. For instance, government workers are supposed to undertake a transparent beneficiary recruitment process, and on the other hand, AIP private traders are required to adhere to prescribed principles of transparency and accountability.

The AIP guidelines stipulate that the targeted beneficiaries for the program are ultra-poor households, and that trading hours for AIP farm inputs are from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm. No supplier is allowed to sell AIP inputs after the government authorized trading hours. The analysis of the scores across all the sampled sites in the three districts however shows that majority of the respondents were generally not satisfied with the levels of transparency and accountability. This is reflected by an average consolidated score of 30% with the following reasons:

- a) The beneficiary selection process was not transparent enough as local leaders were not engaged in the process.
- b) In some selling points the farm inputs were sold to vendors at night contrary to the AIP set guidelines.
- c) AIP beneficiaries: *"we were not communicated as to when the next stock of inputs would be available deliberately and the inputs were sold to vendors". AIP inputs are sold to vendors at night while we are told the inputs are out of stock*
- d) Some AIP suppliers were demanding extra money from the beneficiaries to access the inputs.
- e) Some beneficiaries only got one type of fertilizer and could not be allowed to get the second one because some AIP suppliers had removed the other one and sold

it to non-eligible people. *“My second bag of fertilizer” was removed without my knowledge when I got my first bag. When I came to collect my second bag, I was told you already collected it. Yet I was told during the first collection that the other type is not available”.*

- f) Some beneficiaries had received poor quality and quantity fertilizer. *“My inputs did not measure up to 50 kg nor was it the type indicated”.*
- g) National IDs were easily stolen electronically as such some names of the beneficiaries were missing at the point of selling. Women and the elderly *“Our IDs were stolen”.*
- h) Vendors were buying National IDs from AIP beneficiaries.
- i) Lack of awareness to sensitize the communities to protect their IDs from Vendors
- j) Limited supervision and monitoring of the AIP by district council officials, district agricultural teams, and the civil society.
- k) Beneficiaries: *“Our complaints were not attended to by the Agricultural Extension Development Coordinator (AEDC)”.*
- l) The police did not act on reported corruption cases involving service providers.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

“ we were not communicated as to when the next stock of inputs would be available deliberately and the inputs were sold to vendors”.

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“We were spending long time some times more than a day waiting on the queues to access the farm inputs”

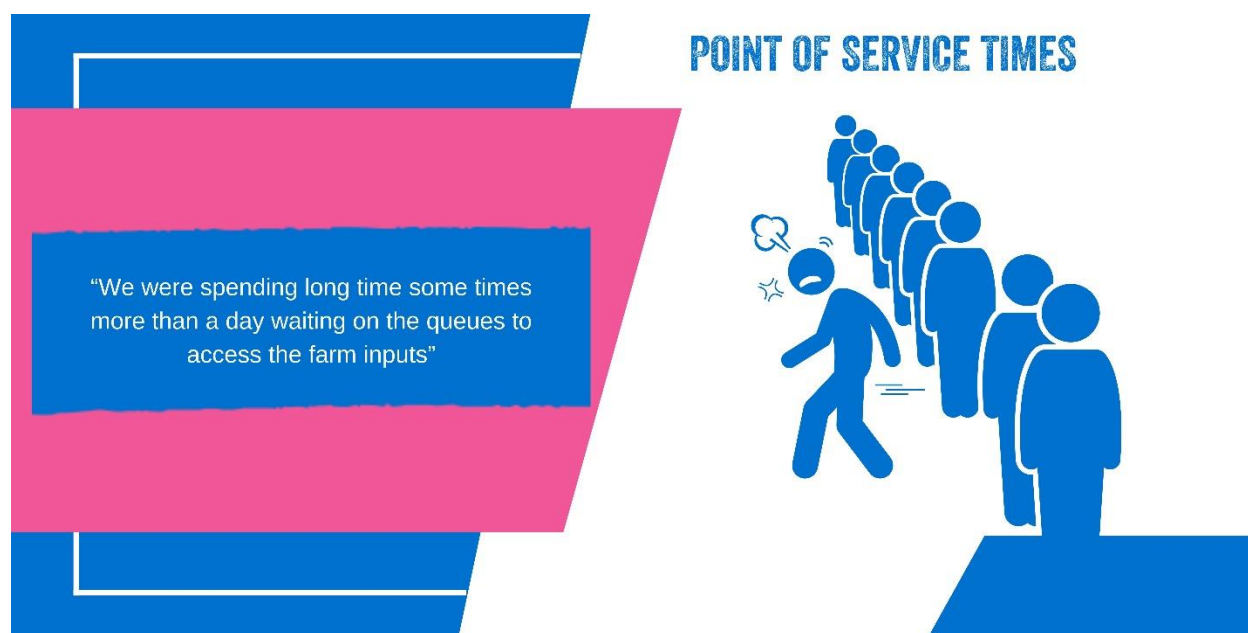


2.1.7 Point of Service times

Majority of respondents were generally not satisfied with the point of service waiting time as reflected by an average consolidated score of 32.3%. The following average scores were recorded across the three districts; Mzimba (20%), Kasungu (40%) and Mangochi (36.8%). The following reasons were given for the scores.

- a) Beneficiaries: *“We were spending long time some times more than a day waiting on the queues to access the farm inputs”.*

- b) In most selling points markets were opening late. For example, in Mzimba district the respondents reported that AIP selling points were opening at 10:00 am instead of 7:30 am and closing as early as 2:00 pm instead of 4:30 pm.
- c) Beneficiaries were spending nights at the selling points waiting to buy the inputs.
- d) There were very few suppliers who were overwhelmed to serve the beneficiaries.
- e) Some shops had few workers and inconvenienced beneficiaries to spend long hours and /days to access the inputs.
- f) Poor internet connectivity was also delaying the selling of the inputs to local farmers.



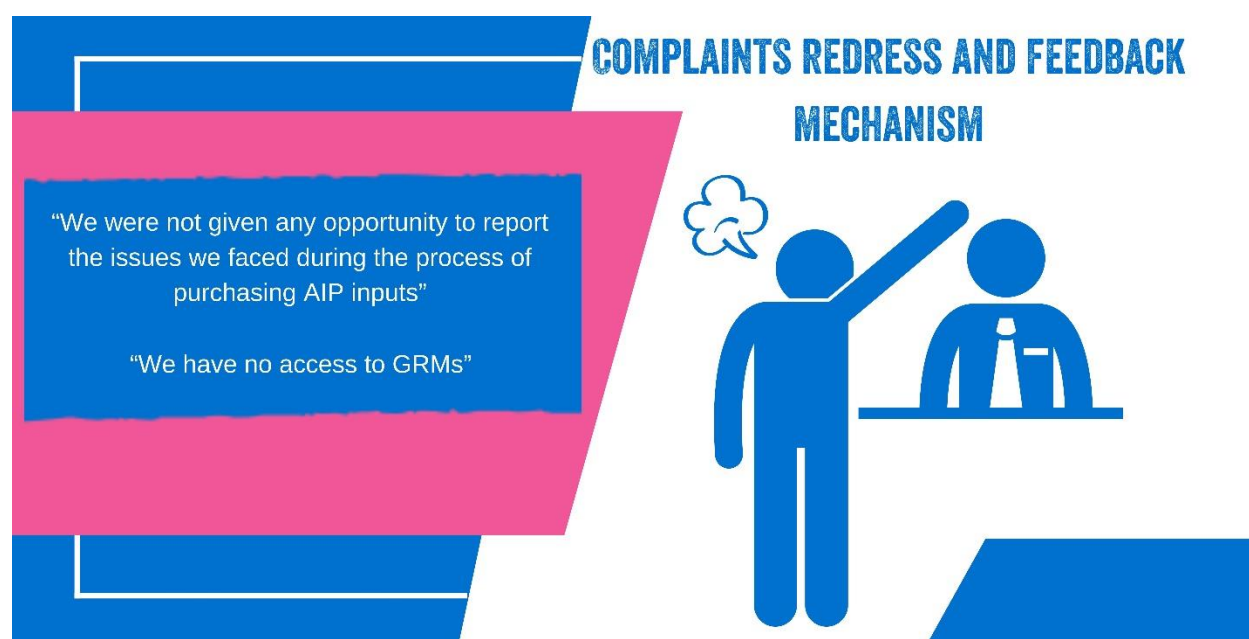
2.1.8 Complaints redress and feedback mechanism

The AIP guidelines provide for proper grievance redress mechanisms (GRM) to help address beneficiary complaints at district and community levels. Where the GRM structures are not available local communities exploit the already existing community structures such as community policing forum, the Area Development Committees (ADCs) among others to help address complaints related to AIP.

The respondents were not satisfied with the way the government officials and AIP suppliers were handling complaints. Almost all the groups engaged expressed disapproval in the manner AIP complaints were responded to. Generally, the respondents explained that in most selling points there were no GRMs to help address beneficiary complaints, and where GRMs existed their performance was not satisfactory. For example, Mzimba and Mangochi districts gave a consolidated score of 5%, while Kasungu gave a consolidated score of 50%. The overall average score is 20%. Kasungu

reported that in some areas, communities used the already existing local structures to address complaints, however most of the structures were corrupted by vendors hence failed to play their rightful roles. Largely, the low consolidated scores were attributed to the following reasons:

- a) Lack of complaint redress mechanisms for beneficiaries when faced with challenges during the purchase of AIP inputs.
- b) No feedback from police or government officials when beneficiaries present complaints.
- c) AIP beneficiaries: *“We were not given any opportunity to report the issues we faced during the process of purchasing AIP inputs.”*
- d) AIP GRMs were centralized at district and national levels hence inaccessible to the marginalized and vulnerable groups: *“We have no access to GRMs.”*



2.1.9 Utilization of inputs by beneficiaries

Overall, majority of the groups engaged in focus group discussions were satisfied with utilization of inputs by beneficiaries. In Mzimba district, for instance, the following scores were reported by the groups; elderly (60%), men (70%), service providers (90%) women, beneficiaries and traditional leaders gave a score of 50% respectively. In Kasungu, the respondents gave a consolidated score of 60% saying those who benefited from the AIP supplies used them for the intended purpose. The consolidated score is therefore 67.5%.

It is also important to however mention that *some respondents who scored lowest on the theme observed that some of the beneficiaries were selling fertilizer after buying to satisfy their needs such as drinking beer or buying food.*

2.1.10 Maintaining beneficiary dignity and community support

Beneficiary dignity was measured by the conduct of suppliers towards beneficiaries, and the events that occurred at the selling points. The respondents gave mixed views on whether the AIP program was maintaining the dignity of the beneficiaries and providing support to the community. For example, while the service providers say the AIP program respects the rights of the beneficiaries, AIP beneficiaries' women, men and the elderly say, *"The program offered little respect to the elderly and pregnant women we had to queue to access the farm inputs."*

In Kasera area Tradition Authority Njombwa beneficiaries complained that, *"We are grouped together in the same line men and women which does not give privacy and respect to the beneficiaries."*

In addition, the majority of the respondents reported that at many selling points beneficiaries were sleeping on queues waiting for supplies or to access the inputs. According to some respondents the situation promoted immoral behaviour and put the lives of women and other vulnerable groups at risk. Other respondents also reported that at some selling points particularly in Mangochi beneficiaries, *"We were ill-treated by market clerks."*



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by the various stakeholders during the interface meeting. The interface meeting was conducted after the administration of the community score card, focus group discussion and key informants' interview. The meeting brought together, local communities, local leaders, government officials and AIP suppliers.

- There is a need to supply farm inputs before the onset of the rainy season.

- There is a need to increase the selling points.
- There is a need to consider the inclusion of all vulnerable groups of people in the program.
- The AIP committee needs to discuss on how to respond to the complaints and the issues raised at the community level.
- There is a need to improve the internet connectivity to ensure the effectiveness of the programme.
- There is need for the district team to intensify the monitoring of the program to ensure quality.
- The Government should engage the suppliers in time to ensure timely delivery of farm inputs.
- There is need to increase the number of AIP beneficiaries to include the marginalized and vulnerable groups currently not benefiting from the program. Or
- To reform the programme in a way that a universal subsidy be created where the better off beneficiaries should obtain their farm inputs as most countries do.
- There is a need to maintain the AIP for the 20.4% core poor using a different distribution mechanism which will ensure that the marginalised and vulnerable groups are reached.

3.0. DETAILED REPORT AND FINDINGS ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

Beneficiary Selection

Across the three districts the participants were satisfied with the beneficiaries' selection criteria and had an average score of 73%. They, however, noted that in rare cases some well-to-do individuals are included. Further, the exclusion of chiefs from the selection process resulted in the system retaining names of the deceased. In Kasungu they identified the following positive elements of the selection procedures:

- The program targeted the most vulnerable
- It was targeting one person in a family
- The selection being done by the people from the district made the process transparent.

From the service provider's point of view the Social Cash Transfer Committees were also satisfied with the process as indicated by scores of 75% Mzimba 75% Kasungu and 70% Mangochi providing 73.33% as the average score; however, they also concurred with the beneficiaries on the following challenges:

- People were not aware of the programme.
- Most Elderly people do not benefit from the programme. *"We do not benefit from the SCTP."*
- The list was manipulated by the chiefs.

- Community members that mastered the vulnerability assessment questionnaire were lying to have themselves included on the list of beneficiaries.

Inclusion

Participants from Mzimba and Kasungu were satisfied, as they considered the process to be inclusive enough and the scores were 75% and 80% percent respectively. Their satisfaction was alluded to:

- *The inclusion of elderly;*
- *Households hosting the chronically ill,*
- *Persons with disabilities and*
- *Child headed households as beneficiaries of the program.*

In Mangochi, it was different, because the community members were extremely dissatisfied, they considered the programme not to be inclusive enough as it left out more vulnerable groups. They pointed out the following challenges:

- *“We, the ultra-poor households are not included in the programme.”*
- The number of the beneficiaries were low leaving many eligible beneficiaries out
- Inclusion of some ineligible beneficiaries at the expense of eligible beneficiaries
They expressed that there is need for stakeholders and government to find a better way of getting to the most vulnerable households without bias.

Service providers from the three districts stated that the programme was inclusive with an average score of 70%; and Mzimba rated it at 80%, Kasungu 70% and Mangochi rated it 60%. Despite their satisfaction they observed that inadequate funding is the inhibiting factor for incorporating all the vulnerable groups. They pointed out that *“the failure of the programme to expand and allow an exit strategy for the beneficiaries who have moved out of poverty. Failure to update the database timely makes the illegible people to continue benefiting from the program even when the index beneficiary is deceased.*

SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP) BENEFICIARY SELECTION & INCLUSION

"We do not benefit from the SCTP"

"We, the ultra-poor households we are not included in the program"

"The failure of the programme to expand and allow an exit strategy for the beneficiaries who have moved out of poverty."

" Failure to update the database timely makes the illegible people to continue benefiting from the program even when the index beneficiary is deceased"



Coordination

Coordination mechanisms have been defined as sharing of information and collaboration of different community level structures and other district stakeholders. In Mzimba the average score was 50% indicating slight satisfaction, Kasungu it was 80% implying that there was good communication and collaboration between the service providers and beneficiaries, while, in Mangochi it was 10% expressing extreme Dissatisfaction. The overall score was 46.7%. the reasons for the dissatisfaction are:

- There was no coordination of the programme with existing local structures to enhance service delivery
- The programme lacks support of local leaders because they are not allowed to benefit from SCT programme. *"Our traditional leaders do not support the program because they don't benefit from it."*

The service providers from all districts, however, considered the program to be well-coordinated. Mzimba scored 80%, Kasungu 80%, Mangochi 70%. The overall score was 76.7%. The high score is an indication that all the structures were aware of the programme and how it was operating.

SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

COORDINATION

"Our traditional leaders do not support the program because they don't benefit from it."



Time Management

In Kasungu, community members applauded the service providers for mostly keeping the schedule even though in rare occasions it was missed, they scored 80%. In Mzimba and Mangochi they expressed that service providers were not being considerate because the beneficiaries wait for long hours during the payment days. Service providers were satisfied with how they manage the time, however they agreed to have faced logistical challenges and sometimes they missed the schedule due to planning challenges at the office. Despite the limitations raised, the communities generally said: *"We are happy with the time management, and the programme is much better than many other governments led programs like the AIP."*

SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP) TIME MANAGEMENT

"We are happy with the time management, and the programme is much better than many other governments led programs like the AIP"



Transparency and Accountability

The participants in all the districts indicated that the programme was transparent with the overall score of 90%. The beneficiaries were happy with the way the process was conducted, especially during cash distribution, and they said that the cash disbursement process was credible, as they were told the amount they were supposed to receive. The selection was done by officials from the district hence it was regarded fair, and during the initial unified beneficiary registrar (UBR) it was done in public, so it was transparent. Despite the satisfaction the beneficiaries pointed out common challenges which were noted in all the districts as follows:

- The community said: *"We are not aware of the procedures of recruiting new beneficiaries and replacing the deceased beneficiaries."*
- The community did not know much about the SCT program because they were not involved.
- In some cases, *"conflicts arose between the district teams and community members on the disbursement processes"*.
- During registration the committee members skipped some households without explanation.

The service providers felt that the program was transparent with an average score of 73.3%. The justification being that the beneficiaries were informed of the amount of money they were expected to receive. The service providers however raised concerns over the behaviour of some local leaders and other duty bearers who took advantage of their position of authority to influence the registration of illegitimate individuals into the system at the expense of the vulnerable populations.


SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

"We are not aware of the procedures of recruiting new beneficiaries and replacing the deceased beneficiaries".

"conflicts arose between the district teams and community members on the disbursement processes".

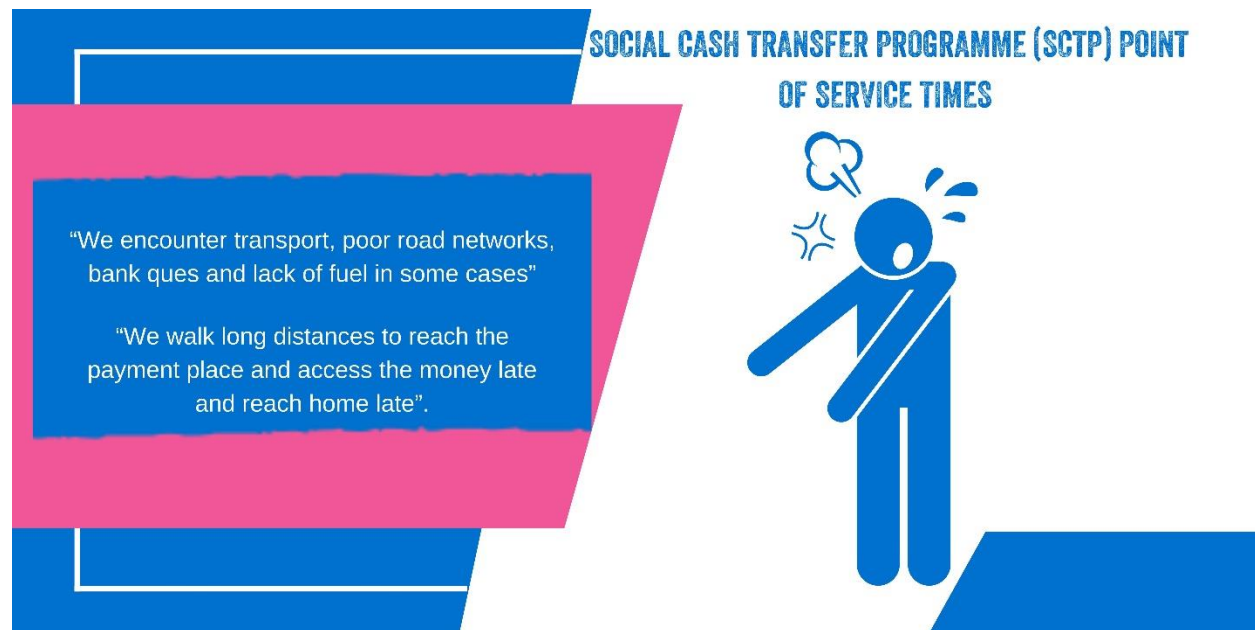
"some local leaders and other duty bearers who took advantage of their position of authority to influence the registration of illegitimate individuals into the system at the expense of the vulnerable populations "



Point of Service times

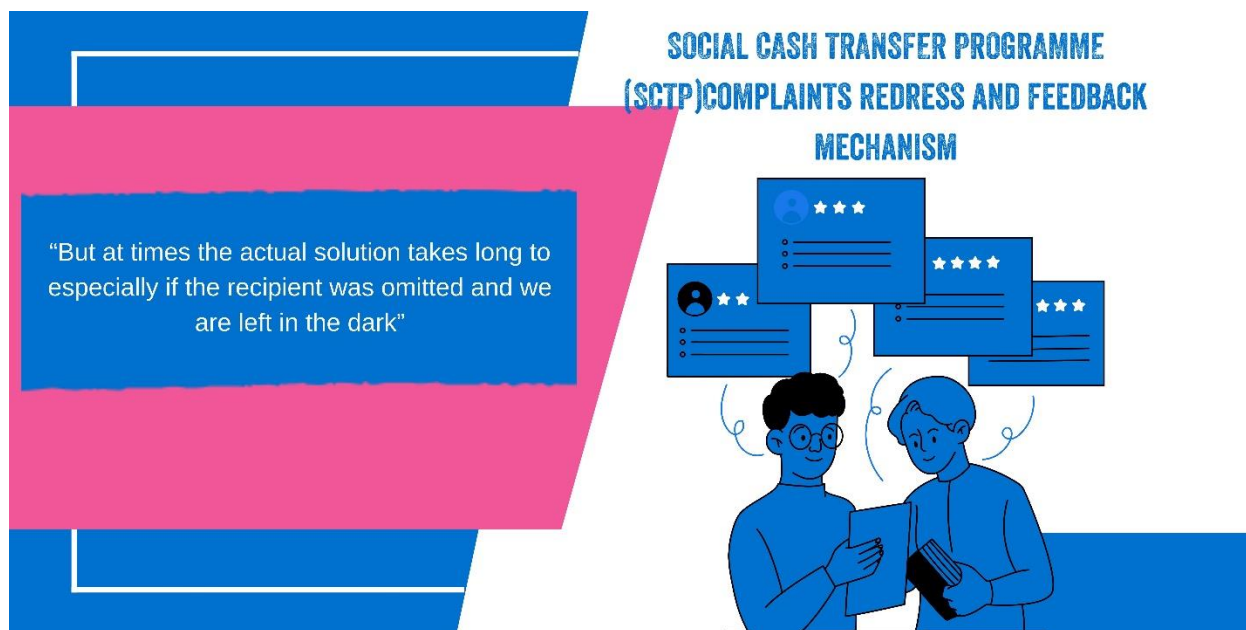
Participants from Mzimba and Kasungu generally expressed satisfaction with the time it takes to receive cash with an average score of 71.7%. Communities and service providers agree on the disbursement dates. Most of the social cash transfer groups indicated that the officials are usually on time, and they communicate to the beneficiary groups whenever they encounter some challenges. The challenges duty bearers face: *“We encounter transport, poor road networks, bank queues and lack of fuel in some cases.”* In Mangochi, they were slightly satisfied because of long waiting time at times by beneficiaries for government service providers who make payments.

- The beneficiaries indicated that: *“We walk long distances to reach the payment place and access the money late and reach home late.”*



Complaints redress and feedback mechanism

The participants were satisfied with the way the complaints are handled indicated with an average score of 65%. The programme has a grievance reporting desk at the paying point where problems are reported and documented. In this way the complaints are dealt with and the beneficiaries felt that the programme is better organised than most government implemented programmes. *“But at times, the actual solution takes long especially if the recipient was omitted, and we are left in the dark.”*



Utilization of cash by beneficiaries

The community members from all the districts were satisfied with how beneficiaries use the cash as indicated by the average score of 65%. Some of the positive stories are the SCTP has improved livelihood of beneficiaries because some use the cash to:

- *‘We pay school fees for children’;*
- *“Built better houses”;*
- *‘Buy inputs’*
- *“Buy the food they require and improve nutrition.”*
- *“Purchase livestock like goats, pigs and other basic needs.”*

The service providers were also satisfied with how the beneficiaries use the money; impressed with how the programme has improved the lives of beneficiaries. But some beneficiaries misused the money.

Both the beneficiaries and service providers pointed out that *“the cash is not enough especially with the rise in the cost of living; and there is need to integrate AIP and SCTP.”*

SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

UTILIZATION OF CASH

"We pay school fees for their children"
"Built better houses"
'Buy inputs'
"Buy the food they require and improve nutrition".
"Purchase livestock like goats, pigs and other home basic needs".
"the cash is not enough especially with the rise in the cost of living; and there is need to integrate AIP and SCTP".



Maintaining beneficiary dignity and community support

In general terms the beneficiaries were satisfied with the fact that the cash helps them to maintain their dignity with the overall score of 65%. On the other hand, the respondents, however, felt that they were not respected by the community and government service providers. Sometimes they are called bad names such as *"we are called recipients of free arms [Amanja Lende] lazy people for being the beneficiaries of the Social Cash Transfer programme."*

SOCIAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME (SCTP)

MAINTAINING BENEFICIARY DIGNITY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

"we are called recipients of free arms [Amanja Lende]
lazy people for being the beneficiaries of the Social
Cash Transfer programme"



RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMMUNITY ON THE SCTP

The respondents from all the 3 districts made the following recommendations to make the programme even better:

- All the group categories wanted the programme to continue but requested an increment of the number of beneficiaries.
- Community members and service providers recommended increasing the amount of money allocated to match the devaluation of the Kwacha and inflation. *"The ideal amount is K45,000 considering other variables."*
- Chiefs and the community should take part in the evaluation of the legibility of beneficiaries as it was done at the beginning of the programme.
- The service providers should improve the way they address complaints, and they should provide timely feedback on the issues raised.
- There is a need to sensitize the beneficiaries and local community structures on the programme and how the beneficiary concerns can be solved.
- The SCTP beneficiaries should be enlisted on AIP.
- Communities should be sensitized to the programme in order to remove the discriminatory words of [Amanja Lende].
- There is a need for a transparent process of recruiting and graduating SCT beneficiaries involving all key stakeholders.
- A need to integrate transformative approaches to redress the social-cultural impediments and societal power inequalities in which children and elderly are rooted.
- Need for cost-benefit calculation regarding universal versus targeted approaches
- Improve the evidence base and sharing of experiences on child-sensitive social protection policy and programming.
- Government should introduce a categorical targeting criterion to facilitate segmentation of all vulnerable categories.



Discussion

- The citizen generated data (CGD) methodology has provided the salient areas which may not be noted or revealed on daily basis because when ultra-poor are desperate at the point of receiving assistance what is critical is to get the service. They also fear reprimands and loss of the service thinking it is a favour. The situation is worse for marginalised groups.
- The fact that over 80% of the marginalised groups are not aware of SDGs and cannot articulate them is a worrisome situation considering that only less than 10 years are remaining until 2030. There is a need to intensify awareness creation and implementation of programmes which will assist Malawi to attain the SDGs.
- SDG 1 on poverty is very far from being met regardless of targeted programmes for the ultra-poor. The need to intensify such programmes while increasing the amount of cash and placement for AIP services provision cannot be overemphasized.
- It is clear that the voices of the marginalised groups despite the services targeting them are mostly not heard and there is also discrimination against some vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, the elderly and persons with disability.
- AIP programme does not include girls and boys regardless of being a child headed household or not.
- While SCTP accommodates school going boys and girls, the lack of graduation criteria makes the programme recipient dependent regardless of it bringing dignity to the ultra-poor, chronically ill, child headed households, persons with disability and elderly.
- The removal of local leaders from the verification criteria using the Universal Beneficiary Register (UBR) means that dead people continue to appear and can easily create abuse.
- The use of a 5-year-old database for the selection of social protection beneficiaries could easily lead to abuse.
- The fact that SCTP depends mainly on donor support is worrisome and not sustainable unlike the AIP which receives government budgetary allocation.
- It should be noted that the 20.7% ultra-poor will always be there, and they will require targeted support.
- The findings of the CGD should be used for policy, planning and strategy development to make the service better for the beneficiaries and services providers.
- The need to reform the AIP to universal subsidy and increase the SCTP to K45,000 (USD 44) a month cannot be over emphasized.
- Proper planning, policy direction and strategies will make Malawi a middle income country and achieve the SDGs by 2030 and move towards the achievement of the MW 2063.
- The policy brief will therefore outline possible lines of action.

Appendix

The study tools are attached as **Annex I**

District specific reports are attached as **Annex II**

AIP guidelines is attached as **Annex III**

Social Cash Transfer guide is attached as **Annex IV**